Sunday, May 10, 2026 No 129 ₹8

DH on Sunday

DECCAN HERALD
The Power of Good

WFI puts Vinesh's comeback on hold

P10

Quickly

ED arrests Punjab minister

The ED on Saturday arrested Punjab Industries Minister Sanjeev Arora following raids in connection with an alleged Rs 100-crore GST fraud-related money laundering case involving certain entities linked to him.

APU student suspended; peers protest

Tension gripped the Azim Premji University (APU) campus in Bengaluru after a student was handed a two-year suspension in connection with the violence in the campus on February 24.
Details on Page 5B

Terror threat: Delhi on alert

Delhi has been placed on high alert following intelligence inputs indicating a possible terror threat, prompting Delhi Police and other security agencies to intensify surveillance across sensitive areas.

Iran keeps US waiting on response to peace plan

Tehran 'suspicious' about seriousness of American proposals

TEHRAN, AFP

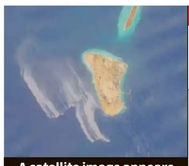
Iran questioned the seriousness of American diplomacy on Saturday in the wake of renewed naval clashes in the Gulf, while keeping Washington waiting for a response to its latest negotiating position.

US President Donald Trump had said on Friday that he was expecting Iran's response to Washington's latest proposal for a deal to extend a fragile truce and launch peace talks — "supposedly tonight".

But if Iran did send Pakistani mediators a response, there was no public sign of it, and Tehran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi called into question the reliability of the US leadership in a call with his Turkish counterpart.

"The recent escalation of tensions by American forces in the Persian Gulf and their numerous actions in violating the ceasefire have added to suspicions about the motivation and seriousness of the American side in the path of diplomacy," he said, according to the ISNA news agency.

▸ Iran, Page 6



A satellite image appears to show an oil slick near Iran's oil hub of Kharg Island. It was not clear what caused the apparent spill. AFP

West Asia developments

- UK says it will send a destroyer to West Asia to help protect shipping in Strait of Hormuz
- New Israeli strikes outside Beirut despite a ceasefire
- Hezbollah says it targeted a gathering of Israeli soldiers in northern Israel
- Bahrain says it dismantled an organisation linked to Iran's Revolutionary Guards and arrested 41 members.

Indian sailor killed near strait

An Indian sailor was killed and several others injured after their wooden dhow caught fire near the Strait of Hormuz, government sources said on Saturday. Seventeen other Indian crew members were rescued.

US plans minimum wage hike for hiring H1B workers

WASHINGTON, PTI: The US has proposed to increase the minimum wages paid to hire an employee under the H1B visa programme by 30% over the previously fixed limits, a move it claims will help prevent foreigners from undercutting salary of US nationals.

The new rule, proposed by the US Department of Labour on March 27, seeks to increase minimum wages for four categories from the entry-level to the most-experienced, contending that the existing wage levels were fixed 20 years ago and fail to protect US workers.

The current methodology allows employers to hire foreigners at wage levels significantly below those paid to similarly employed US.
Details on Page 8

GREATER BENGALURU AUTHORITY

PUBLIC NOTICE

CENSUS OF INDIA - 2027 FIRST PHASE

HOUSELISTING OPERATION

Public residing within the jurisdiction of the Greater Bengaluru Area are hereby informed that the first phase of Census of India –2027, Houselisting Operation is currently in progress across all City Corporations and will be completed by 15.05.2026.

Residents are requested to kindly cooperate with the Enumerators and Supervisors deputed for Census duty and furnish the required information accurately and in case if the enumeration of your house / apartment / establishment has been left out or if no Enumerator has visited your premises, you are requested to immediately contact the respective City Corporation Control Room through the numbers given below:

BENGALURU CITY CORPORATION	CONTROL ROOM CONTACT NUMBERS
Bengaluru Central City Corporation	080-22975803 / 9480685702
Bengaluru East City Corporation	080-28512300 / 080-28512301 / 9480685706
Bengaluru West City Corporation	080-23561692 / 080-23463366 / 9480685703
Bengaluru North City Corporation	080-22975936 / 080-28636671 / 9480685705
Bengaluru South City Corporation	080-26566362 / 080-22975703 / 9480685704

Your cooperation is essential for ensuring complete and accurate coverage

Every Household Counts

Chief Commissioner
Greater Bengaluru Authority, Bengaluru

Defence boost as India tests advanced Agni missile

System strengthens India's deterrence & joins nations with MIRV capability

KALYAN RAY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

India has successfully conducted the flight trial of a long-range missile, with multiple warheads hitting different targets spread over a large geographical area.

Senior Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) scientists and the Indian Army personnel witnessed the trial.

The successful test flight of an advanced Agni missile with a multiple independently-targeted re-entry vehicle (MIRV) system from Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island, Odisha, was carried out on Friday, May 8, said the Defence Ministry in a statement on Saturday.

What weapon?

- Agni-5 missile has a range of up to 5,000 km. The Agni 1 to 4 missiles have ranges from 700 km to 3,500 km and they have already been deployed
- Test was part of Mission Divyastra
- Telemetry and tracking were carried out by multiple ground- and ship-based stations
- The first successful trial of such a system happened in March 2024

Agni missile with MIRV system being launched.

The missile was flight-tested with multiple payloads, targeting different locations spatially distributed over a large geographical area in the Indian Ocean Region.

The test was part of Mission Divyastra, in which MIRV technology is being integrated with Agni-5 missiles to hit multiple targets at different sites using a single missile launch. The first successful trial happened in March 2024.

For Friday's test, the telemetry and tracking functions were carried out by multiple ground and ship-based stations that tracked the entire missile trajectory from liftoff to the impact of all payloads.

An analysis of flight data confirmed that all mission objectives were met during the trial, the ministry said.

With this trial, India demonstrated for the second time its capability to target multiple strategic targets using a single missile system.

Developed by DRDO laboratories with the support of Indian industries, the weapon system added to the country's defence preparedness against the growing threat perceptions, said Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

New Delhi has been trying to develop MIRV technology for over a decade, but success has been limited so far.

Globally, the technology came into being in the 1960s during the Cold War era.

Adityanath likely to expand UP Cabinet

SANJAY PANDEY
LUCKNOW, DHNS

The much-awaited expansion of the Uttar Pradesh Cabinet is likely in a day or two. Sources said that the expansion might take place on Sunday or Monday.

Yogi Adityanath

Speculations about the Cabinet expansion, a year ahead of the next Assembly polls in the state, gathered momentum after Chief Minister Adityanath met Governor Anandiben Patel at Jan Bhavan on Saturday.

State BJP sources said that five to seven new ministers might be included in the Cabinet, while some current ministers might be shifted to the party organisation.

The sources also said that members of the electorally influential Jat and Gurjar communities might get more representation in the Cabinet, while at least one Brahmin face was also likely to be made minister.

The sources added that some Dalit and OBC faces too could also be made ministers in the reshuffle, which was likely to be the last before the next Assembly polls.

The names doing the rounds included Bhupendra Choudhary, Manoj Pandey, Ashok Kataria, Pooja Pal, Shrikant Sharma, Krishna Paswan, and Rajeshwar Singh.

There were currently 54 ministers in the Adityanath Cabinet. There can be a maximum of 60 ministers in the state, which means six more ministers could be included in the Cabinet.

Punjab minister arrested in Rs 100-crore ED probe

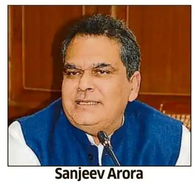
NEW DELHI/CHANDIGARH, PTI

The Enforcement Directorate on Saturday arrested Punjab industries minister Sanjeev Arora in connection with a new money laundering case involving him and several entities allegedly linked to him, officials said.

According to officials, Arora (62) was taken into custody under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) following early morning raids at his official residence in Chandigarh. They noted that he was "non-cooperative" during the investigation and will be brought to Delhi.

Searches at 5 locations

The ED conducted searches at five locations across northern India as part of this operation, which included two premises in Delhi and a company named Hampton Sky Realty Ltd in Udyog Vihar, Gurugram.



Sanjeev Arora

These raids came after the central agency registered a new case under the criminal sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), officials mentioned.

On April 17, the ED raided Arora and his linked entities under the civil provisions of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA).

As part of this action, officials said, the agency provisionally attached on April 19 the movable and immovable assets of Hampton Sky Realty Ltd, its director Arora, and entities linked to him for alleged FEMA violation through bogus sales and exports to the tune of Rs 157.12 crore.

Arora (62) is an Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLA from the Ludhiana West assembly seat.

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann condemned the raids during a press conference in Sangrur, accusing the BJP-led Central government of using agencies like the ED and the CBI as "weapons" to pursue political goals.

The latest probe (under the PMLA) pertains to "fake" GST purchases of mobile phones worth more than Rs 100 crore and subsequent exports to allegedly "round trip" illegitimate funds from Dubai to India, according to the ED.

CBI raids 17 Mumbai locations linked to Anil Ambani group

MUMBAI, DHNS: In a major swoop, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Saturday raided 17 locations in Mumbai linked to the three cases registered against Anil Ambani-led Reliance ADA Group companies—Reliance Telecom Ltd., Reliance Commercial Finance Ltd., and Reliance Home Finance Ltd.—and their directors.

It may be recalled that the CBI, during the last few months, has registered seven cases against the Reliance Group based on the complaints lodged by various public sector banks and LIC in connection with alleged fraud involving thousands of crores of rupees.

The total quantum of alleged loss in these cases is Rs 27,337 crore, CBI officials said on Saturday.

Anil Ambani

On Saturday, searches were conducted at the residential premises of directors of the Reliance ADA Group companies as well as at the office premises of intermediary companies whose accounts were used for diversion of bank funds.

The searches have resulted in the seizure of incriminating documents, officials said.

Searches have also revealed that multiple intermediary companies were operating from the same address.

The group is facing investigations by the CBI as well as the Enforcement Directorate.

CJI denies casteist statement attributed to him

NEW DELHI, PTI: Chief Justice of India Surya Kant on Saturday condemned and denied a casteist statement attributed to him, calling it a "vile, brazen and mischievous" concoction.

"To manufacture a fictitious quote, and to attribute it to the highest judicial office of the land, is an act of rank dishonesty, deliberate social incitement, and contempt for constitutional values," CJI Surya Kant said.

He was referring to certain posts in wide circulation on social media platforms, and specifically mentioned an account by the name @UnreservedMERIT on X.

HC notice to EC, Centre in plea alleging voter deletions

SATISH JHA
AHMEDABAD, DHNS

The Gujarat High Court has issued notices to the Election Commission, the state government and other agencies on two separate petitions seeking an investigation into "conspiracy to delete genuine" voters from the electoral list.

The petitions have sought a probe by the Special Investigation Team. They have claimed that as part of a "larger conspiracy", thousands of illegal objection applications under Form-7 were filed seeking deletion of voters' names during the recently concluded Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in the state.

Justice Hemant Prachchhak issued notice on Friday while posting the matter for further hearing on July 7.

Form 7, a highly controversial provision, is used to object to the inclusion of an individual's name in the electoral roll. According to the rules, the person filing the objection must be a voter in the same constituency, and the burden of proof lies with the objector. However, in these cases, such criteria were not followed.

One petition has been filed by Mehdihasan Saiyedmehmood Naqvi, a resident of Kodinar in Gir Somnath district. Naqvi is the president of the Kodinar City Congress committee. "Most shockingly, there has been a blatant and large-scale misuse of Form-7, whereby a massive number of objections have been filed seeking deletion of names of genuine voters from the electoral roll, particularly targeting voters belonging to the Muslim community across the state, including Kodinar Constituency," the petition claims.

The petitioner reportedly found that around 47 individuals had "illegally, maliciously and sinisterly filed as many as 6,722 applications, seeking deletion of thousands of genuine voters, including the name of the present petitioner."

KEY CHARGES

- Petitions in the Gujarat HC allege 'conspiracy' and large-scale misuse of Form-7 during voter roll revision
- Allegations of targeted deletions, including against members of the Muslim community
- Petitioners seek Special Investigation Team (SIT) probe into alleged irregularities in electoral rolls

The other petition has been moved jointly by Chandanji Talaji Thakor, Abdul Hamid Nurmuhammed Moknojiya and Abdulrehman Chotubhai Rangrej. They have also alleged that an "enormous number of objections have been filed" targeting "the Muslim community across various constituencies in the state".

Thakor is a former Congress MLA from Sidhpur, while Maknojiya is the president of the Sidhpur Taluka committee, while Rangrej is a businessman and vice-president of Jamiat Ulama-e-Hindi. The petitioners' names were included after objections turned out to be illegal and fake.

During their inquiries into such objection applications, they found that thousands of applications were filed in bulk as part of a "sinister intention." They found that one Bharatji Thakor had filed about 140 applications. The petitioners also found that one Dipsangji Thakor had filed Form-7 against Rangrej, and when he was contacted, he told the petitioner he didn't personally know him.

Bengaluru Sunday, May 10, 2026 Pages 24 Vol 79 No 129 ₹8

DH on Sunday

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DECCAN HERALD
The Power of Good

Royals fall into Rashid trap

Wily veteran hands GT 77-run victory after Gill-Sudharsan show

P10

Travel *Page16*

Picture-perfect

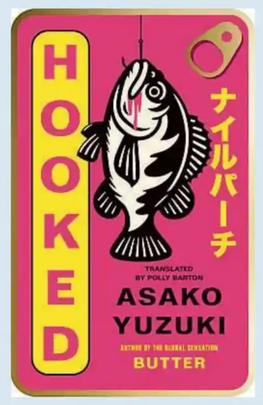
The eminently walkable city of Prague is known for its bridges, churches, and river views

Art & Pursuits *Page18*

Bichitra Club stories

An unusual experiment that was born about 111 years ago in Jorasanko, in the heart of Kolkata, transformed the world of art

Books *Page15*



Uneasy truths

Hooked, by bestselling author Asako Yuzuki, is striking because of the way it portrays the complexity of women's worlds

Food & Drink *Page17*

Say cheese

India's artisanal cheeses are replacing European varieties and finding a place on fine dining menus

Heat sears poor neighbourhoods as state response falls short

Vulnerable residents across Karnataka face extreme heat with limited access to water, shelter and basic services, exposing gaps in planning and preparedness

CHIRANJEEVI KULKARNI
BENGALURU, DHNS

Kotresh's initial reticence soon gave way to anguish as he spoke about living without water supply for over three months at a Greater Bengaluru Authority-run shelter next to Kempegowda Metro Station in the heart of the state capital.

"I am not a beggar," he said. "I work as a daily wage labourer and save every penny in the hope of setting up a tea stall. But I spend Rs 50 a day just to use the bathroom and toilet at a nearby private facility. There are elderly and vulnerable people here who cannot afford even that. What will they do? People are worried about drinking water because there is no water to flush the toilets at night."

He gestured towards the shelter, which houses around 35 homeless people on an average each day.

About a kilometre away, in the Bhangi Colony slum, where six to 10 people often live in cramped 150-250 sq ft houses without windows, 50-year-old Nirmala sat outside her house. The narrow strip of shade cast by an asbestos sheet jutting out from the roof offered little relief, but the moving air and open surroundings were still preferable to the oven-like heat trapped indoors.

A family living in a house with an asbestos-cement roof in Bengaluru. DH PHOTO/PUSHKAR V

INSIGHT

The colony, comprising around 350 houses, is home to more than 1,200 residents, most of whom rely on public toilets.

"I pay Rs 5 every time I use the toilet and end up spending more than Rs 400 a month," Nirmala said. "We think twice before drinking the water. Its quality is poor. This summer, the heat has been particularly harsh, and I am worried about my grandson who is less than a year old," she said, as she gently rocked the child on her lap.

Extreme heat is not new to Karnataka. Discussions on the issue go back decades and the first assessment under the Karnataka State Action Plan on Climate Change in 2013 acknowledged the threat posed by heatwaves, noting that "projected increases in temperature may increase the frequency of heatwave and thermal stress, leading to heat cramps, dehydration, influenza, cardiovascular and respiratory diseases".

In 2019, the state government notified heatwave as a natural disaster and announced compensation of Rs 4 lakh for the kin of victims.

However, official definitions of a heatwave have long failed to account for the vulnerabilities of people with limited or no access to resources that could help them adapt to the impacts of climate change.

For instance, many residents of Bengaluru experienced unusually high temperatures this April, with the mercury hovering between 35°C and 38°C. While these conditions did not technically meet the official criteria for a heatwave, relying rigidly on such definitions to shape local policy has overlooked the lived realities of lakhs of people.

▸ Heatwave, Page 2

Medical control to reproductive autonomy

Despite SC rulings, India's abortion regime remains constrained by medical boards and statutory limits, limiting autonomy

JWALIKA BALAJI & MANDAR PRAKHAR

Indian abortion law has long been framed around medical permission. The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971 (MTP Act) was enacted as an exception to the existing criminal law provisions on miscarriage and termination. The Act primarily protects registered medical practitioners from prosecution for terminating pregnancies within specified conditions and time limits. This makes the law heavily medicalised and centred on when a doctor may legally terminate the pregnancy.

The **SUNDAY STORY**

Over the past two decades, however, some Supreme Court judgments have begun to ground medical termination of pregnancy in reproductive autonomy, dignity and consent. This does not make medical opinion irrelevant, but it changes the constitutional lens through which the MTP Act must be read. The decision cannot turn solely on medical approval; the woman's consent and autonomy must remain central.

This move began most clearly in *Suchita Srivastava v Chandigarh Administration* (2009), where the Apex Court held that reproductive choice is part of personal liberty under Article 21, and includes the right to terminate and continue a pregnancy. The principle was strengthened in *X v Principal Secretary, Health and Family Welfare Department* (2022), where the court held that reproductive autonomy cannot depend on marital status. It recognised that women's choices are shaped by family, caste, religion, stigma and social vulnerability, but held that the decision must ultimately belong to the pregnant woman.

▸ Reproductive choice, Page 2

Golden Opportunity to own a Plot in Madikeri Town

Sri. Siddaramaiah
Hon'ble Chief Minister

Sri D. K. Shivakumar
Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister

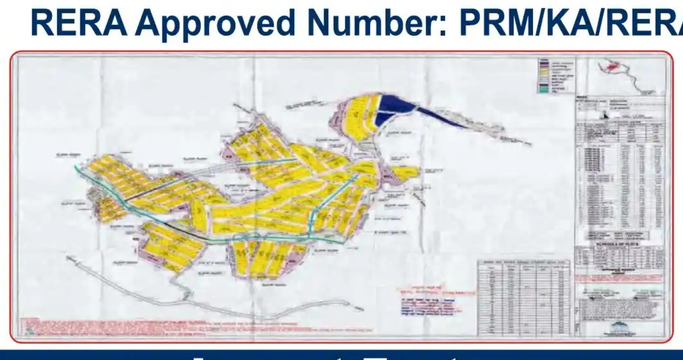
Karnataka Housing Board
and
M/s. Pratipati Projects Private Limited Joint Venture Project
CAUVERY TOWNSHIP

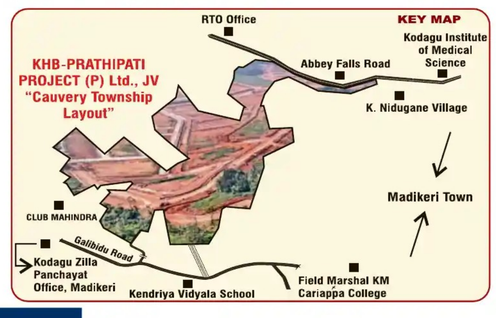
Developers: SRC Infra Developers Private Limited

Hon'ble Minister for Housing, Waqf & Minority Welfare, Sri B. Z. Zameer Ahmed Khan and Chairman of the Karnataka Housing Board Sri K. M. Shivalinge Gowda, Discussing the progress on Housing Projects at the Board Meeting

Scan here for Layout Location

RERA Approved Number: PRM/KA/RERA/1264/437/PR/110325/007577





Layout Features

- 9m, 12m, 15m & 18 Mtrs. Wide Roads • Street Layout Electrification
- Water supply and drainage system with Sewerage Treatment Plant
- Gardens and playgrounds
- Reserved Plots for Civic Amenities (Public/Semi-Public)
- Well planned Layout surrounded by abundant greenery

Convenient Location of Layout

- Adjoining to Madikeri Town • KSRTC Bus Stand
- Vivus Hospital • More Supermarket • Kendriya Vidyalaya
- Kodagu Medical College Institute
- Field Marshal KM Cariappa College

Loan Facility is available from Banks

Tourist spots near Layout

- Abbey Falls • Mandalpatti • Raja Seat • Sri Omkareshwara Swamy Temple

Karnataka Housing Board
Cauvery Bhavan, K. G. Road, Bengaluru-560 009. Tele Phone: 080-2227 3511

ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: ಕಗೃಮಂ/ಕಾ/ಹಂಚಿಕೆ/ಮಧ್ಯಂತರ ನಿವೇಶನ/2026–27 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 07.05.2026

PUBLIC NOTICE

Karnataka Housing Board in collaboration with Prathipati Projects Private Limited, Bangalore has developed a residential estate with all basic and public facilities in a total area of 94.45 acres of land including various survey numbers in K. Nidugane village, Madikeri city, Kodagu district under a joint venture (Marketing JV) scheme. Applications are invited from the public online for the allotment of the following categories of plots in the said estate. The details of the properties available for allotment are as follows.

Location and District	Category and measurement (in Meters.)	Estimated Plots	Registration Fee (₹)	Initial Deposit (₹)	Price per Sq. Ft (₹)
K. Nidugane Village, Madikeri Hobli, Madikeri Taluk, Kodagu District	EWS - 6.0 x 9.0 M	32	300/-	50,000/-	775/-
	LIG - 9.0 x 12.0 M	179	500/-	1,75,000/-	1,550/-
	MIG - 9.0 x 9.0 x 15.0 M	83	1,000/-	2,00,000/-	
	HIG-I - 12.0 x 18.0 M	139	1,500/-	2,50,000/-	
	HIG-II - 15.0 x 24.0 M	26	1,500/-	2,50,000/-	

Applications can be submitted through the board's website **https://www.khb.karnataka.gov.in from 15-05-2026** to pay the registration fee and initial deposit through e-payment. **The last date for submission of applications is 16-06-2026.**

Terms and Conditions:

1) Interested public can submit online application for Madikeri project by paying registration fee and initial deposit through e-payment.
2) Applicants who have previously paid registration fee for houses and plots in Madikeri project in the demand survey on 29-06-2009 can also pay the prescribed initial deposit amount online to be eligible for allotment of this project. Since houses are not constructed in the said project, applicants who have applied for Madikeri project for houses will also be considered for allotment of plots.
3) Vacant plots including irregular plots in the said layout will be considered for e-lottery. Once a plot is allotted, no alternative plot will be allowed for any reason.
4) The properties will be allotted through category wise e-lottery as per Rule 9 of Karnataka Housing Board Allocation Regulations 1983.
5) Those who apply for reservation under the respective category (SC/ST/Defence/Ex-service, Central Govt, Phy-challenged person, Senior Citizen, others) should submit the documents along with the application.
6) If the applicant who applied in the demand survey dated 29.06.2009 also requested category wise reservation, the documents issued by the competent authority should be submitted along with the application.
7) If the amount paid is less than the prescribed initial deposit, such applications will not be considered for e-lottery.
8) At the time of application, the applicant should be a resident of the state of Karnataka for a period of not less than 10 years.
9) The applicant should upload a notarized affidavit stating that the applicant, his/her spouse and children have not obtained any flat/house/plot from the Karnataka Housing Board or any other local body/authority.
10) Applicants for Economically Weaker Section (EWS) plots should obtain an income certificate from the concerned Tahsildar stating that their annual family income does not exceed Rs. 1,20,000/- for those residing in rural areas and Rs. 2,00,000/- for those residing in urban areas and submit it along with the application.
11) The properties will be allotted on outright sale basis.
12) The total number of properties mentioned in the advertisement and the category wise properties are subject to change at the time of allotment. The Karnataka Housing Board reserves the right to do so.
13) The initial deposit paid along with the application will be refunded without any interest to the applicants whose sites are not allotted. Or if more applications are received than the sites available for allotment, the remaining applications after allotment of the available sites will be considered for allotment of 60% of the sites released in the project at the revised rate. In this regard, the applicants whose sites are not allotted will have to give a separate consent letter for refund after allotment or consideration for allotment of the remaining 60% sites.
14) In case of cancellation after allotment, 25% of the initial deposit will be refunded after forfeiting the money.
15) The project has been designed and constructed in accordance with the land elevation and during the construction of the building, appropriate retaining walls and foundations according to the soil bearing capacity (without affecting the technical and technological environment) shall be constructed and the design plan shall be approved by the Madikeri Urban Development Authority subject to the condition that permission from the concerned local body and technical opinion from the authority shall be obtained before the construction of the building in the design. Therefore, the above condition of the authority shall be applicable for the construction of the building in the allotted sites.
16) As per the condition imposed in the order number: V.E. 39 K.G.M. 2016 Bangalore dated: 28-04-2016, if any disputes arise in this project, the private developers shall resolve them. As per the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreements, which have been maintained by paying only marketing fees for the development of the project as per the government approval, the joint venture partner, Me: Pratipati Projects Private Limited, Bangalore, is solely responsible for the management of the assets allocated in the said layout and the layout and also for handing over the layout to the local body for further management.
17) For further information regarding the assets, the Joint Venture Project Partners may contact **(a) Shri Dayanand K.B., Manager, Tel. No.: 9739946532 (b) Gururaj Site Engineer, Tel. No.: 9686202507.** And for details regarding allocation and submission of application, **the Assistant Executive Engineer/Revenue Officer,** K.M.M., Kodagu Sub-Division, Mysore Office in person or through **Tel. No.: 0821-2343094/0821-2543237.**

Inauguration

MEDICOVER
WOMEN & CHILDREN
HOSPITAL
BENGALURU

MEDICOVER WOMEN AND CHILDREN HOSPITAL

Date: 10th May 2026 | **Time:** 10:00 AM

Venue: Medicover Hospitals, Hoodi, Whitefield

INAUGURATION BY

Ms. Rukmini Vasanth

Renowned Actress
Kannada & PAN-Indian Film Industry

INVITED BY

Dr. G. Anil Krishna
Chairman & Managing Director - Medicover Hospitals

Dr. A. Sharath Reddy
Executive Director - Medicover Hospitals

Mr. P. Hari Krishna
Executive Director - Medicover Hospitals

Dr. A R Krishna Prasad
Director - Medicover Hospitals

Dr. Praveen Venkatagiri
Executive Medical Director
Medicover Institute of Perinatology & Advanced Pediatrics

Dr. Lathiesh Kambam
Chairman & Director of
Medical Affairs-Advanced Paediatrics
& Perinatal Services,
Medicover Women & Children Hospitals, India

Dr. Shivashankar Diggikar
Regional Director -
Karnataka & Maharashtra.
Perinatal & Neonatal Services,
Medicover Women & Children Hospitals

MEDICOVER BENGALURU HIGHLIGHTS

- 100+ Expert Doctors
- World Class Cathlab, Robotics, MRI, CT & Operation Theatres etc.,
- 30+ Specialities
- High-Risk Pregnancy Care
- Safe Delivery & Water Birth
- Level III NICU
- 24/7 Pediatric& PICU Care
- ★★★★★Hospital, Personalised Care
- Cashless Admission with Insurances & TPA's
- 200 Car Parking Facility

MEDICOVER INDIA HIGHLIGHTS

26 Hospitals | 16 Cities | 6649 Beds | 1736+ ICU Beds | 160+ Operation Theatres | 25+ Cath Labs | 1 Crore + Patients Treated | 1250+ Doctors | 13000+ Employees

MEDICOVER HOSPITALS NETWORK - INDIA: KARNATAKA | TELANGANA | ANDHRA PRADESH | MAHARASHTRA | PROVIDING HEALTHCARE SERVICES IN 12 EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

Amul Ice Cream
As special as a mother's love

Ice Malai Mango
125 mL / ₹50*

Cassatta Gold
150 mL / ₹65*

Shahi Kulfi
Rajbhog
100 mL / ₹70*

King Alphonso Gold
1L / ₹260*

Black Forest
Cake Magic
500 mL / ₹350*

THIS MOTHER'S DAY, TREAT YOUR MOM TO AMUL ICE CREAM.

MOM'S SPECIALS

Cake Magic
Golden Fantasy
500 mL / ₹325*

Butterscotch
Bliss Tub
1 L / ₹215*

Choco Crunch Gold
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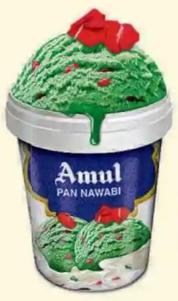

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76% of Indians face high to very high heat risk

- About **57%** of India's districts, home to **76%** of the population, face high to very high heat risk
- While **27%** of districts fall under the moderate heat risk category, **16%** fall under low or very low risk

- **Delhi, Maharashtra, Goa, Kerala, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh** and **Uttar Pradesh** face the highest heat risk
- About **70%** of districts saw at least five extra very warm nights per summer, compared to **28%** that saw very hot days during 2012–22

- **18 Karnataka districts** are vulnerable to heatwaves at varying level

Why are cities getting hotter

- Dense urban built-up areas make Indian cities highly **vulnerable** to heat stress
- **Buildings, roads** and other structures absorb and trap heat, creating urban heat islands (UHIs) that can raise city temperatures by **3–5°C**
- **Limited green cover** and high pollution from industries, vehicles and air-conditioning reduce natural cooling and trap heat
- The **UHI** effect harms **urban biodiversity** and reduces the quality of life in cities

Relief measures only on paper

Heatwave, from Page 1

In the slums, however, conditions felt nothing short of a heatwave for the poor. One need not look beyond the heart of Bengaluru, which is home to a significant share of the more than 40 lakh slum residents recorded across the state in the 2011 Census. Many of these residents are migrants from villages who moved to the city in search of livelihoods.

Multiple studies have shown that houses with asbestos and corrugated tin roofs record daytime temperatures about 6°C higher and night-time temperatures 2°C to 3°C higher, than the ambient temperatures reported by the India Meteorological Department.

The impact can be devastating for the elderly, children and women engaged in caregiving, who are often exposed to conditions resembling "wet-bulb" temperatures — a combination of high heat and trapped humidity caused by poor ventilation inside the houses. The dense clustering of houses in slums, which contributes to the urban heat island effect, along with radiant heat from thin roofs and the lack of green cover, further worsens conditions.

The climate action cell of the Greater Bengaluru Authority has launched a pilot project to study the impact of insulated roofing, which is estimated to reduce indoor temperatures by around 2°C. Officials have also proposed additional mitigation measures, though most remain at the planning or pilot stage.

C S Patil, a senior scientist at the India Meteorological Department, said that climatologically, the 38.2°C maximum temperature recorded in the city on April 28 was one of the higher points in recent years, after the 39.2°C recorded in 2016.

He added that temperatures in Bengaluru could rise to around 39°C in May, but the onset of pre-monsoon rains is expected to bring relief and help cool the city.

Inequality

Such relief, however, has often remained out of reach for people living in heat-affected districts of Karnataka, as well as the lakhs of residents crowded into slums and low-income settlements in Bengaluru and other cities.

The Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre (KSNDMC) issued heatwave alerts for 10 to 15 districts last month, largely covering parts of northern and coastal Karnataka.

The poor, whose contribution to climate change is negligible, are among the worst affected. Kausalya, a leader of the Slum Mahila Sanghatane, said that most residents in Bengaluru's Bhangi Colony and Jolly Mohalla, where she works on improving household conditions, belong to marginalised castes.

"Most residents here belong to marginalised communities and work as pourakarmikas, waste processors and in other occupations where people from privileged groups are largely absent," she added.

This reality is especially stark in the arid north of the state. Shettiappa Maralubyhatti, who migrated from Bagalkot to Hubballi three decades ago in search of work, now lives in the Hosur slum.

"While the monsoon brings one kind of challenge, with rainwater gushing into our homes, it is becoming hard to survive the summers inside the house," Maralubyhatti said, pointing to his 8 ft by 12 ft dwelling where an asbestos roof makes it impossible to even support a fan.

Shettiappa's neighbour, Vaishali Bidarkatti, said she faced several problems. The open drain in front of her house has become a mosquito breeding ground, posing a constant health risk to her family.

"Besides, while the men go out for work, we have to bake in this asbestos-sheet-roofed house," she added.

Like slum settlements, even houses built under government housing programmes for the poor continue to find it difficult to access reliable electricity.

Yellamma Colony, located about 3.5 km off the main road in west Bengaluru's Tavarekere, comprises over 300 houses built for the Hakki Pikki community and other disadvantaged groups under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana.

However, the settlement still lacks electricity supply, even two years after families moved in. The residents, who secured these houses after a decade-long struggle led by the Savitribai Phule Women's Collective, say they are exhausted by the continued lack of basic services.

Almost all the Hakki-Pikki women make plastic crafts, flowers and decorative materials, which are sold by their husbands. "I work in this heat to make these materials. If I am lucky, my husband will sell it and bring Rs 200 home in the evening. There is no power and no water connection here. Sometimes we draw electricity from the main line. We have been requesting the authorities to complete the toilet work, but no one listens to us," said Manjula Vighnesh.

Residents here use the wooded area behind the colony as an open toilet. The sighting of a leopard has sent fear making women avoid coming out in the night.

The heat's impact on livelihood has become evident in the poor neighbourhood of Kalaburagi, where temperatures reportedly touched a record 46°C last month. Residents of the Tarfile Colony say the night-time re-radiation of heat has turned into a nightmare. They complained that extreme heat leads to lack of sleep due to which they face fatigue and even dizziness. They cannot concentrate on work at the workplace and home.

"I have been engaged in construction work along with my husband. Increasing cost of living has prompted both of us to work. We have to spend sleepless nights if there is a power cut. Hard work during daytime and lack of sleep at night will cause psychological stress. We cannot afford air-coolers and extreme heat causes various health problems including fatigue, dehydration among children and elderly people in our house", Reshma Matangekar, a resident, said.

Heatstroke

Is heat causing death? "Not this year," said a District Health Officer, speaking on condition of anonymity. "We review the case history and the condition of the deceased. We assess whether heat was an underlying factor by looking for signs of dehydration or indications that the death was caused by heatstroke."

A data sheet from *The Lancet* released last year noted that compared to 1990–1999, people in 2024 were exposed, on average, to 366 additional hours of ambient heat, posing a risk of heat stress during moderate outdoor physical activity. "This was a record high," it said.

The Lancet report estimated 92,608 deaths attributed to heat across India and 10 other countries in the South-East Asia region.

It also warned that temperatures have continued to rise in the past two years, according to the State of the Global Climate report released by the World Meteorological Organization.

Dr Indumathi V, Medical Superintendent at Ballari Medical College and Research Centre, said most cases reported at the institute involve dehydration, diarrhoea and weakness. "As per the state government's orders, we have reserved a separate ward for heatstroke patients. However, no admissions have been reported so far. We are currently treating patients with heat exhaustion using IV fluids and ORS," she said.

A senior doctor at Victoria Hospital said it is often difficult to determine the cause of cardiac arrests in taluk and district hospitals. "In most cases, there is hardly any awareness among people. At the same time, doctors here do not have the necessary resources," he said.

Systemic reorientation

The lack of clarity around such deaths has made it difficult to assess the full impact of heatwaves. In two separate incidents last month, two labourers working under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme collapsed and died in two villages of Sindhanur taluk. The District Health Officer of Raichur and the Sindhanur taluk health officer did not respond to calls and messages seeking comment.

A community health practitioner who recently completed her MD and worked in DJ Halli and Bellandur in Bengaluru as part of outreach programmes said that the specifics of heatwaves are yet to fully percolate within much of the medical community.

"Over the last three years, I have experienced and seen that the level of discomfort during summer is completely different," she said. "However, even now, when a patient comes in complaining of fatigue, my initial response is to look for the usual causes. Though guidelines are issued, they are generic in nature. Our systems have not trained us adequately to identify and diagnose heat exhaustion and heatstroke."

Ritvik Ranjanam Pandey, Principal Secretary of the Health and Family Welfare Department, said the shift is expected to come. "The heat action plan has been prepared and circulated. This requires coordination across departments to address the problem. We will look into this matter," he said.

(With inputs from Pavan Kumar H in Hubballi, Raju Gavali in Belagavi, Shilpa P in Mysuru and Vittal Shastri in Kalaburagi)

The hidden disaster

- India is highly vulnerable to heatwaves due to its tropical and subtropical location
- Heatwaves in India have become more frequent, intense and longer, with recent decades recording some of the warmest years on record
- Intensifying heatwaves pose serious threats to public health, ecosystems and the economy

India may lose over 3.4 crore full-time jobs in 2030

- A 2024 report by the ILO said India lost an estimated **$100 billion** from heat-induced productivity losses
- Between 2001 and 2020, India lost around **259 billion** hours of labour annually due to humidity and heatwaves, costing India **Rs 46 lakh crores** in total
- The ILO estimates that India will lose around **5.8%** of its total labour hours in 2030 due to heat and humidity
- Due to heat stress, India may lose over **3.4 crore** full-time jobs in 2030
- A 2021 study found that every **1°C** rise in temperature could reduce India's manufacturing output by **2%**

The gaps

- Most **Heat Action Plans** lack detailed risk assessments, are not locally tailored, and do not identify funding sources for implementation
- In contrast to official reports of **14 heat-related deaths** (March–June 2025), HeatWatch recorded 84 suspected heatstroke deaths, highlighting data gaps in mitigation planning
- **IMD** heatwave alerts rely only on temperature thresholds and exclude Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT), which accounts for **heat** and **humidity**, leading to fatalities even on "non-alert" days
- About **90%** of India's workforce – mostly outdoor and informal workers – continue working in **peak heat** without mandatory breaks, shade or cooling access despite guidelines
- Weak coordination between **health, urban** and **disaster agencies** and a focus on short-term warnings over long-term resilience

Heat-related health impacts

Dehydration · Cramps · Exhaustion · Heatstroke

Associated effects

Acute gastroenteritis · Food poisoning · Skin reactions · Behavioural change · Menstrual health issues · Palpitations · Nervousness · Anxiety · Adverse pregnancy outcomes

> Heatwave action plan is an umbrella framework that assigns different responsibilities to various departments as part of mitigation and preventive measures. We have prepared the plan by taking inputs from stakeholder departments because, ultimately, they are the implementing agencies.
>
> **M S DIVAKARA,** KSNDMC director

417 of 734 dists face greater risk

On April 27, 2026, India accounted for 50 of the world's hottest cities, with an average peak temperature of **44°C** and a lowest maximum of **41.9°C**

Bihar, UP account for 26% of heat-related deaths (2018-2023)

State	Deaths
Andhra Pradesh	397
Bihar	610
Haryana	237
Jharkhand	312
Karnataka	7
Madhya Pradesh	99
Maharashtra	526
Odisha	236
Punjab	573
Rajasthan	136
Tamil Nadu	5
Telangana	551
Uttar Pradesh	583
West Bengal	144

Total of all states 4,602

(Sources: AQI data, CEEW report 2025, Heatwatch report, PIB, NCRB report, ATREE report, ORF, KSNDMC Heatwave Action Plan, IDR, 'Heat Stress, Labour Well-being, and Productivity amidst Heat Waves', 'The impact of Temperature on productivity and labour supply: Evidence from Indian manufacturing', media reports)

COMPILED BY DIVYASHRI MUDAKAVI
DH GRAPHICS: GURU PRASATH R

Bengaluru shelter homes face facility gaps

The shelter homes in Bengaluru were developed under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana–National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM). The 48 shelters in the city were set up as a measure to support the urban poor and vulnerable populations. However, many of the users are daily wage workers who try to save a portion of their limited earnings and send it back to families in distant villages.

The erstwhile Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) had invited tenders and awarded the management of shelter homes to non-government organisations. However, over the past two years, residents and users say that essential facilities have not been adequately provided.

Of the two shelters visited by *DH*, one did not even have a fan, despite accommodating over 25 people resting after a day's work in extreme heat. At the shelter on Tank Bund Road in Bengaluru, a broken sewage chamber near the staircase was emitting a strong foul smell. The facility, which has a capacity of 45 beds and typically houses around 30 people every day, has also seen disruption in water supply from the civic agency.

Sources in Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana–National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM) said the programme was earlier funded with 60% contribution from the Centre and the rest from the state. "Two years ago, the Centre suddenly stopped the programme. There was a push for states to take over operations and management," a source said.

M Maheshwar Rao, Chief Commissioner of the Greater Bengaluru Authority, said the matter would be looked into. "If the NGOs are responsible, we will take action," he said.

Have your say

To express your opinion, e-mail us at: insight@deccanherald.co.in

Reproductive choice, from Page 1

Medical boards cannot be moral gatekeepers of the foetus

A (Mother of X) v State of Maharashtra (2026) and *S v Union of India* (2026) extend this reasoning into the context of late-term abortions.

In both cases, the pregnancies were well beyond the statutory threshold — around 30 weeks in the first case and 28 weeks in the second. Yet, the court refused to let the MTP Act's time limits (up to 24 weeks in most cases) supersede the constitutional inquiry. It considered the pregnant minor's unwillingness to continue the pregnancy, and the physical, mental, emotional and social consequences of forced childbirth. In *S v Union of India*, the court went further, holding that where no effective statutory remedy remains, constitutional courts cannot mechanically defer to statutory limits. The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) then filed review and curative petitions resisting the court's direction to terminate the pregnancy, citing foetal viability and medical risk. The Supreme Court refused to entertain them, making it clear that AIIMS could counsel the girl and share medical information, but could not decide for her or defeat her constitutional right to choose.

Consent over institutional judgment

Medical boards undoubtedly play a role in assessing clinical feasibility and risk. However, they cannot become moral gatekeepers of a foetus. In recent years, courts have increasingly deferred to medical boards regarding termination pleas, effectively turning them into the arbitrators of women's bodily autonomy. The choice is thereby taken away from a woman and entrusted to a third party, with many pleas denied on grounds of foetal viability. When these aggrieved women approach the courts after crossing the statutory threshold, judicial reasoning itself varies. While some courts affirm the progressive jurisprudence of reproductive autonomy, others often end up forcing gestation on the pregnant women, suggesting that the child may be placed for adoption after birth.

Adoption is routinely presented as an "alternative", as though the injury only lies in foetal termination and not in forced gestation itself. While it might seem like an easier choice, a woman compelled to carry an unwanted pregnancy is forced to undergo months of medical risk, physical transformation, psychological distress, labour pain and social stigma. Therefore, what happens is a complete cycle of suffering induced by institutional indifference long before the child is born.

In this context, Jonathan Herring's ethics of care framework becomes particularly relevant. He argues that termination, beyond being an individual liberty claim, can also serve a broader public good. In his account, wanted pregnancies represent caring relationships voluntarily entered into and nurtured through emotional and material investment. Contrarily, unwanted pregnancies represent coerced care. The law should hold no ethical interest in coercing forced gestation devoid of consent and support.

These ethical insights find stark support in empirical evidence. The five-year *Turnaway Study* in the US found that women denied termination were more likely to report negative emotions, mental health symptoms or suicidal thoughts than those who were given termination access.

Coordinated change

Historically, medical termination in India has not been framed primarily as a moral or theological question in law and policy, as it has in parts of the West. Instead, it has largely been justified through public health and family planning objectives. The MTP Act further liberalised termination largely to eliminate the practical concerns of unsafe abortions and maternal mortality, as well as the social consequences of unwanted pregnancies. However, India's present difficulty lies not merely in the letter of law but in the way constitutional expansion is achieved through litigation.

Adjudication of reproductive justice by courts in India is done on a case-by-case basis. Pertinently, a recent dataset examining over a thousand termination petitions before Indian courts found that a significant proportion involved women who were already within the statutory ceiling to access termination. This meant that even though women met the conditions of the MTP Act, medical boards were disallowing termination. Particularly stark is the number of minors and survivors of sexual violence who were compelled to approach courts often due to denials by medical practitioners. The pitfall of such an approach is that courts are simply not accessible to many; even when they are, given that the judiciary does not speak in a single voice, the outcome is really dependent on the composition of the bench and their inclinations.

This brings us back to the fundamental question: do pregnant women lose personhood once pregnancy crosses the statutory limit? The answer is no. A constitutional democracy committed to dignity and bodily autonomy must ensure that children are born into conditions where they are wanted, welcomed and cared for, not to unwilling mothers coerced into motherhood.

Two changes are, therefore, necessary. First, the progressive jurisprudence on reproductive autonomy must be built into the MTP statute. Concurrently, there is a need for constructive dialogue between lawmakers, the judiciary, the medical fraternity and stakeholders. Unless all these institutional actors work together, pregnant women will never be placed at the centre of decisions about their own reproductive futures.

(Jwalika Balaji is a Research Fellow and Mandar Prakhar is an Associate Fellow at Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy. Views expressed are personal)

BJP rule begins in WB; Suvendu takes oath as CM

Five ministers sworn in; PM says start of new chapter of good governance

ANIRBAN BHAUMIK
KOLKATA, DHNS

As Suvendu Adhikari took over as the chief minister of the first BJP government in West Bengal on Saturday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that the day would be forever remembered as the one that ushered in a "new chapter of destiny, hope, dignity, and good governance".

Suvendu was sworn in by Governor R N Ravi during a ceremony in Kolkata. Five other BJP legislators — Dilip Ghosh, Agnimitra Paul, Khudiram Tudu, Ashok Kirtania and Nishith Pramanik — were also sworn in as ministers.

"He has made a mark as a leader who remained deeply connected to the people and understood the aspirations of the people," Modi said about Suvendu .

The Prime Minister, who flew from New Delhi to Kolkata in the morning, genuflected at the podium as a mark of the BJP's gratitude to the people of West Bengal for giving the party a historic mandate. "I bow to West Bengal's Jana Shakti! The people's blessings are the truest strength of democracy and the noblest source of public resolve," Modi wrote on X.

The historic Brigade Parade Ground turned saffron for the swearing-in ceremony. Suvendu, himself, wore a saffron kurta, along with a white dhoti of Bengal.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, BJP president Nitin Nabin, several other saffron stalwarts and leaders of the party's allies attended the ceremony. So did the chief ministers and other ministers of several states ruled by the BJP or its allies.

The BJP recorded a landslide victory in the just-concluded polls in West Bengal, winning 207 of the 293 seats. The Trinamool Congress, which was in power since 2011, could win only 80 seats. The Election Commission has ordered repolling in the remaining one constituency — Falta in the South 24 Parganas district — for alleged irregularities.

Suvendu succeeded his former mentor and the TMC supremo, Mamata Banerjee. He beat Mamata in her home constituency, Bhabanipur, apart from retaining Nandigram, where he had defeated her in 2021.

The new CM promised good governance, security and holistic development.

▸ Adhikari, Page 6

PM Narendra Modi with West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari in Kolkata on Saturday. PTI

> This government is committed to everyone living in the state. Development, employment generation, safety of women, protection of cultural dignity and safeguarding democratic rights will be our primary objectives.
> **Suvendu Adhikari,** West Bengal CM

Bengal: EC's SIR observer is CM's advisor

Retired IAS officer Subrata Gupta was on Saturday appointed the advisor to the West Bengal CM. Gupta was engaged by the EC as the Special Roll Observer for the SIR, held prior to the elections. The new government also appointed IAS officer Shantanu Bala as the CM private secretary. Bala was the ADM of South 24 Parganas.
Details on Page 7

Cong delays Kerala decision

The Congress on Saturday did not name its choice for the CM in Kerala as a consensus eluded over a single name even after a nearly three-hour meeting of top leaders. The party made it clear that a "final decision" will be taken in "due course". The delay meant that the contenders — KC Venugopal, VD Satheesan and Ramesh Chennithala — were unwilling to dilute their claims.
Details on Page 7

Vijay musters numbers; to be sworn in today

E T B SIVAPRIYAN
CHENNAI, DHNS

Chandrasekaran Joseph Vijay will be sworn in as the chief minister of Tamil Nadu on Sunday, heading the first coalition government in the state's history after his party, Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), mustered two seats more than the magic figure of 118.

Almost all 'secular' parties that were part of the DMK-led Secular Progressive Alliance (SPA) have extended outside support to the TVK government, while the Congress will join Vijay's council of ministers.

TVK chief Vijay

Saturday began with uncertainty but ended on a happy note for the TVK when the Dalit party Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK) and the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), which won two seats each, extended unconditional outside support to Vijay's government.

With this, the number of legislators supporting the actor-politician has gone up to 120. While the TVK's effective strength is 107, the Congress has five MLAs, and the CPM, CPI, IUML and the VCK have eight legislators in total.

Governor R V Arlekar will administer the oath of office and secrecy to Vijay at 10 am at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium here. The chief minister has to prove his majority on the floor of the Assembly by May 13; newly elected legislators are likely to be sworn in on May 11 and May 12.

▸ Vijay, Page 5B

Cross-bred cows boost state milk output

Artificial insemination also helps preserve local breeds

DH EXCLUSIVE

SNEHA RAMESH
BENGALURU, DHNS

Milk production in Karnataka has been surging over the past few years, rising from just 64.86 lakh kgs a day in 2015-16 to close to one crore kgs a day now. Since 2001-02, milk collection by the Karnataka Milk Federation (KMF) has increased by as much as 382%.

While improvement in availability of good fodder and financial incentives have helped boost production, a major reason for the spurt in output is the initiative by the Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services Department to inseminate cows with quality semen collected from foreign breeds and quality bulls.

Over the last few years, annually, close to 70 lakh such artificial inseminations have been carried out, resulting in the birth of cross breed cows that have high milk yield.

From the Holstein Friesian (HF) breed bulls from Germany to Jersey from England, semen banks in the state house close to 100 imported bulls whose semen is collected for artificial insemination.

Of the 70 lakh inseminations, nearly 50% have been carried out by KMF. Over the last seven years, close to 57 lakh calves were born from insemination techniques. Annually, close to eight lakh calves are born through artificial insemination.

"Our native breeds are low milk yielding varieties and hence, artificial insemination was planned to improve the yield by using semen from imported bulls. These imported cattle by themselves cannot survive in the natural climatic conditions here. Hence, we rear imported bulls, collect their semen and use it to breed the cows here," a senior official from the AHVS Department said.

That apart, semen of native indigenous breeds, including the popular Hallikar and Amrith Mahal bulls, are also used to conserve the native breeds.

"Over the years, since many cattle were left to breed openly, it had resulted in production of indiscrete breeds of cattle and our pure native breed numbers have reduced. Hence, we are also producing semen straws of native breeds to conserve them and increase their population," another official said.

Artificial insemination has served multiple purposes, officials said: improvement in milk production, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases in cattle and conservation of native breeds.

Breeding success
- Semen banks house 100 imported bulls, including Holstein Friesian and Jersey
- Over 70 lakh artificial inseminations carried out over the last few years
- 57 lakh calves born from insemination techniques over the last seven years

Lt Gen Subramani new CDS; Vice Admiral Swaminathan appointed new Navy Chief

KALYAN RAY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Former Vice Chief of the Indian Army Lt Gen N S Raja Subramani on Saturday was appointed as the country's third Chief of Defence Staff to carry forward the reforms in higher defence, including the creation of long awaited theatre commands for the armed forces.

The Union government also appointed Vice Admiral Krishna Swaminathan – a Bengalurean – as the next Chief of the Naval Staff to take over from Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi, who will retire on May 31.

A day earlier, Lt Gen Raja Subramani will pick up the baton from the incumbent Gen Anil Chauhan after his tenure ends on May 30.

▸ Navy Chief, Page 6

Lt Gen Raja Subramani

Vice Admiral Krishna Swaminathan

NR Colony to Navy's top post

Vice Admiral Krishna Swaminathan, who has been named the next Chief of the Naval Staff, grew up in Basavangudi's NR Colony. An alumnus of Bishop Cotton Boys' School, he studied at the institution till 1981 before moving to Sainik School, Bijapur. Page 4

ED arrests Sriki, two aides in bitcoin scam case

BENGALURU, DHNS: Bengaluru-based hacker Srikrishna Ramesh alias Sriki, along with his associates Robin Khandelwal and Sunish Hegde, were remanded to 10-day custody of the Enforcement Directorate on Saturday after the central agency picked Sriki from Bengaluru on Friday.

The ED case stems from multiple FIRs and chargesheets filed by the Karnataka Police since 2020 over allegations of hacking national and international websites, stealing bitcoins, extortion and laundering cryptocurrency proceeds through multiple bank accounts and trading platforms.

Sriki was first arrested in November 2020 in a case related to buying hydro ganja on the dark web using bitcoins. During the probe, it was found that he allegedly hacked into online poker sites, crypto exchanges and other websites. Further investigations also revealed his alleged role in stealing Rs 11.5 crore after hacking into the state government's e-procurement portal in 2019.

▸ Sriki, Page 6

Bitcoin case accused Sriki

Who is Sriki?

Srikrishna Ramesh, a 29-year-old Bengaluru native, was once a bright student who allegedly turned to the world of cybercrime during his stay in the Netherlands. Known for his hacking skills, Sriki first gained infamy for allegedly hacking into a Hong Kong-based cryptocurrency exchange in 2015. His transition to a serial offender became public in 2020.

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MAINTENANCE MESS Monitoring gaps persist despite Rs 741 crore allocation

Big civic spend, same dusty roads and choked drains

NAVEEN MENEZES
BENGALURU, DHNS

On paper, all five newly carved corporations under the Greater Bengaluru Area (GBA) have earmarked a total of Rs 741 crore for the upkeep of civic amenities, which is central to the functioning of any municipal corporation. The allocations, made under annual maintenance contracts (AMC), cover works such as pothole filling, road maintenance, footpath repair and desilting of storm water drains, among others.

But on the ground, Bengaluru's infrastructure tells a different story.

Several arterial roads and flyovers continue to remain coated in a thick layer of dust despite dedicated maintenance budgets, while storm water drains in many parts of the city remain clogged with silt, garbage and overgrown vegetation. The condition has worsened, especially after the recent rains.

For desilting primary storm water drains (SWDs) alone, the corporations together spend nearly Rs 60 crore annually, which is more than double what was spent in the past.

Residents across localities, however, say periodic desilting and road-cleaning works mandated under AMC contracts are either irregular or absent altogether. Along the stretches of Vrishabhavathi, Hebbal and Koramangala Valley, uncleared drains continue to raise flooding concerns ahead of the monsoon.

For instance, the rajakaluve at Ulsoor has not been desilted for at least six months. Apart from accumulated silt and garbage, thick vegetation has taken over sections of the drain. A similar situation persists at Geddalahalli near Sai Layout, where the drain has not been fully cleaned for nearly a year despite repeated visits by officials. Even as expansion of the railway vent is underway, the drain remains choked with silt and weeds.

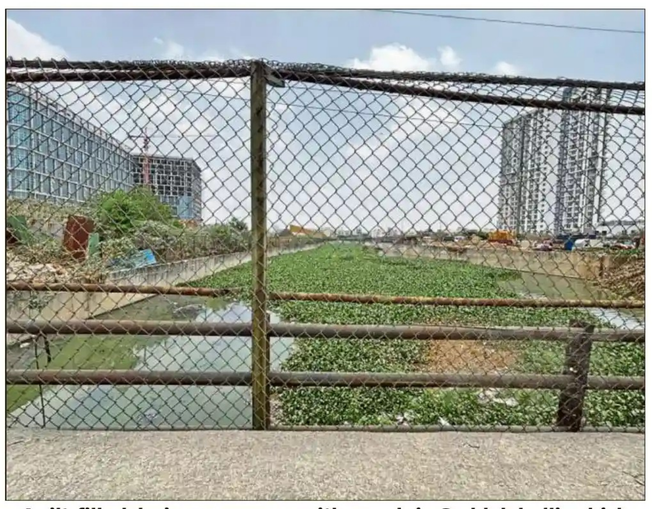
Similarly, commuters point to dusty flyovers and underpasses along Outer Ring Road, Lingarajapuram, in front of the CBI office on Ballari Road and poorly maintained arterial roads, alleging that routine sweeping, debris clearance and footpath upkeep are rarely visible on the ground.

Service benchmark

According to sources familiar with the AMC system, contractors are expected to desilt drains once every three to four months, meaning machinery should ideally return to the same location at least four times a year. Residents, however, allege that such periodic maintenance rarely takes place.

Insiders in the civic administration attributed the poor quality of upkeep to changes in the performance benchmarks linked to contractor payments.

"Earlier, payments were based on the quantity of silt and waste removed from drains. Now, bills are cleared based on service-level benchmarks. Contractors can show drone footage to claim work completion even if the cleaning on the ground is inadequate," a source said, adding that there is no stress on removing the silt and vegetation.



A silt-filled drain overgrown with weeds in Geddalahalli, which residents say has caused flooding in Sai Layout for several years.
DH PHOTO/NAVEEN MENEZES

How B'luru's maintenance funds are distributed

Maintenance works	Central	East	West	North	South
Arterial/ sub-arterial roads	Rs 17 cr	Rs 80 cr	Rs 105 cr	Rs 35 cr	Rs 55 cr
Storm water drains	Rs 9 cr	Rs 11 cr	Rs 15.75 cr	Rs 12 cr	Rs 12.5 cr
Flyovers, underpasses	Rs 20 cr	Rs 1.84 cr	Rs 2.6 cr	Rs 5 cr	Rs 2.4 cr
Emergency works	Rs 2.6 cr	Rs 3.25 cr		Rs 1.8 cr	Rs 6.2 cr
Ward roads	Rs 62.25 cr	Rs 45 cr	Rs 92.50 cr	Rs 59 cr	Rs 84 cr

The same benchmark-based system is understood to be in place for arterial and sub-arterial road maintenance as well.

Ashok Mruthyunjaya, a member of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), alleged that despite large allocations, little visible work was taking place on roads and drains in areas such as Gear School Road, Sarjapur Road, Kasavanahalli and Doddakannelli. "Even when I sought information under the Right to Information (RTI) Act, queries have not been answered correctly," he said.

A senior corporation engineer said delays in approvals often push projects into the following financial year. "Typically, budgets are approved and council resolutions are passed around May. Tendering and estimate approvals may take until October and works begin by December. In some cases, delays occur due to pending approvals from MLAs, causing overlap with the next year's maintenance cycle," the official said.

M Maheshwar Rao, chief commissioner of the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA), said the corporations, with five commissioners at the helm, are able to monitor the work much better than in the past.

"For maintenance of rajakaluves, we have engaged fresh contractors. In places such as Gali Anjaneya Temple, Sumanahalli Junction and Silk Board, which face perennial flooding, cleaning works are being undertaken regularly," he said.

He added that drones were being used to verify whether works had actually been carried out on the ground.

Shivkumar N, a resident of Domlur, said incomplete and poorly monitored civic works were causing hardship to residents. "Roads are dug up, desilting is incomplete and mud is left behind. Officials rarely visit the spot," he said.

L Jeevan, joint secretary of Karnataka Rashtra Samithi, pointed to a shortage of engineers to monitor works at the ward level. "Contractors are least worried about delivering quality work," he said, adding that local body elections should be conducted at the earliest.

Puttenahalli Lake slips from green haven to worry spot

Residents flag dry plants, sewage stench and poor upkeep

ASRA MAVAD
BENGALURU, DHNS

Residents of JP Nagar 7th Phase have raised concerns over the deteriorating condition of Puttenahalli Lake.

One of the few green spaces in the neighbourhood, the lake is frequented by residents for their daily walks and jogs on the 920-metre walking track that surrounds it. Since 2010, the lake had been looked after by the Puttenahalli Neighbourhood Lake Improvement Trust (PNLIT), comprising local residents. That was until July 2025, when the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) took over.

"Ever since then, what was once a lush green space has turned into an area filled with brown, dried leaves and plants. The lake premises is unkempt, and little to no effort is being made to water the plants and trees. This has led to several plants slowly dying over the past six months," said Timmanna Bhat, a regular walker for the past 15 years, adding that the worsening condition of the lake had also impacted the bird population.

"Usually, during the winter months, we see many migratory birds visit the lake. This has been a tradition for years. But this past winter, the number of birds at the lake was low," he added.

Walkers also complained about a foul stench emanating from the lake due to sewage water leaking into a portion of it, forcing many to avoid that stretch.

"There are also security concerns. Without the knowledge of security guards, many people enter the premises beyond the lake's timings and also cross the boundaries to go closer to the lake and sit on the lake bed. This disturbs the birds, which use the lake bed for nesting. Some people also fish in the lake, which is not allowed," said Sapna Rawat, 51.

Before the GBA took over, PNLIT would annually spend Rs 8 lakh on the lake's maintenance. "We had hired three to four gardeners who would look after the area daily. We had installed a drip irrigation system along the lake's border, which no longer seems to work. Plus, the fountain we had installed for aeration is also no longer functional. The mechanisms created to help climbers thrive are broken, and instead of composting bins, dried leaves are strewn across the area. This is a fire safety hazard, as this has caused fires in the past," shared a member of the trust.

Bengaluru South City Corporation officials did not respond to phone calls seeking comments.

In addition to the dying greenery, walkers also complained about a foul stench emanating from the lake due to the leakage of sewage water into a portion of the lake.
DH PHOTOS/ASRA MAVAD

5-year-old girl killed, another child injured as iron gate collapses

BENGALURU, DHNS: A five-year-old girl died on the spot while her three-year-old cousin sustained injuries after an iron gate collapsed on them while they were playing in front of a house in Chikkabanavara on Friday evening.

The deceased has been identified as Gausiya (5), daughter of Imam and Rameeja. The injured child, Sumaiyya (3), daughter of Imam's sister Shakeela, is undergoing treatment at a hospital.

The family, natives of Vijayanagar in Ballari district, work as fruit vendors and were staying in a rented house in Dwaraka Nagar. Police said the two girls were playing while hanging onto the iron gate attached to the compound wall when it suddenly collapsed on them. Gausiya suffered a severe head injury and died on the spot, while neighbours rushed Sumaiyya to a nearby hospital.

The house belongs to Ravi Shankar, and the victims' family had moved into the house barely five months ago. The body was shifted to Victoria Hospital for postmortem examination. Locals alleged that negligence on the part of the house owner led to the tragedy, and said the four-foot gate, which had been fixed a few years ago, had reportedly rusted.

Chikkabanavara police registered a case of accidental death as the victim's parents did not file a complaint against the house owner, a police officer said.

Fire at restaurant kills waiter, four injured

BENGALURU, DHNS

A 45-year-old hotel waiter suffocated to death and four others were injured in a fire mishap at Durga Shri Grand Restaurant in Nagarabhavi 2nd Stage in the early hours of Saturday.

The deceased has been identified as Raj Kumar, a native of Madhya Pradesh. The injured, Jai Beem, Shivanand, Beema Naik and Satish, have been admitted to the ICU and their condition is stated to be stable, police said.

According to a senior police officer, the fire broke out around 1.30 am while the staff members were asleep in a room on the first floor of the restaurant after completing their work for the day.

The workers attempted to escape after noticing the fire, but five of them inhaled thick smoke during the incident. Raj Kumar was later found dead.

Personnel from the Fire and Emergency Services, along with two fire tenders, rushed to the spot. It took two hours to douse the fire and bring it under control.

The fire-damaged Durga Shri Grand Restaurant in Nagarabhavi 2nd Stage, where a waiter died and four others were injured on Saturday.

Furniture, refrigerators, ovens, tables, fans and other materials worth several lakhs were destroyed in the fire.

Locals also broke window panes during rescue efforts to help the trapped workers escape.

Preliminary investigation suggests that the fire may have been caused by a short circuit.

The restaurant, owned by Vishwanath, has reportedly been functioning from the same premises for the last 12 years.

An assistant sub-inspector on night patrol was alerted about the incident. Annapoorneshwari Nagar police have registered a suo motu case against the owner on charges of negligence, and further investigations are on, the police officer said.

Goods worth Rs 13 lakh stolen from warehouse

BENGALURU, DHNS: Electronic goods worth Rs 13.18 lakh, including 17 personal coolers, were allegedly stolen from a warehouse in Mahadevapura. Interestingly, the CCTV cameras at the warehouse were not functioning when the theft took place, raising suspicion of an insider's role, police said.

The complainant, Thomala Madhusudhan, a businessman from Kurnool, told the police that the missing stock was discovered during an audit conducted on May 2 at a warehouse operated by two private agencies.

The stolen items included televisions, air-conditioners, refrigerators, washing machines and personal coolers. Police suspect the theft may have gone unnoticed due to the constant movement of goods in and out of the warehouse during peak business operations.

He checked with the warehouse employees before approaching the police on Friday. Based on the complaint, Mahadevapura police have registered a case against unknown persons and are verifying CCTV footage from neighbouring areas to trace the suspects.

First T-girder cast for Huskur station on suburban rail line

BENGALURU, DHNS: In another milestone for the Bengaluru Suburban Railway Project (BSRP), officials recently cast the first 16.5-metre-span T-girder for Huskur station.

The T-girder has a top length of 14.97 metres, a bottom length of 14.37 metres, a height of 1.49 metres, and a width of 0.45 metre. It is made using 5.156 metric tonnes of steel and 14.90 cubic metres of concrete, K-RIDE said. Huskur station will be part of the Kanaka Line, Corridor 4, which will connect Heelalige in the far south to Rajanukunte in the far north. The deadline for the Kanaka Line is December 2028.

The T-girder cast for Huskur station is 1.49 metres high and 0.45 metre wide. K-RIDE

AI-powered solutions win top honours at NHA hackathon

BENGALURU, DHNS: The two-day Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY) Auto-Adjudication Hackathon Showcase 2026 concluded at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) on Saturday, with the National Health Authority (NHA) announcing winners across three categories focused on improving healthcare claims processing using Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Organised by the NHA under the Union Health Ministry, in collaboration with the IndiaAI Mission and IISc Bengaluru, the hackathon drew over 3,500 participants, including start-ups, researchers, students and technology professionals from across the country.

The event aimed to make healthcare claim processing more transparent and automated, said Sunil Kumar Barnwal, CEO, NHA. "When hospitals raise claims for treatments provided, claim processing becomes one of the important responsibilities of the NHA. Over time, we noticed that the process is not only time-consuming, but can also have inconsistencies," he said.

The hackathon focused on three problem statements. Shortlisted teams presented AI-enabled solutions aimed at automating claims adjudication under AB PM-JAY. Entries were evaluated by industry experts on innovation, scalability and real-world applicability.

Under "Clinical Document Classification and Compliance to Standard Treatment Guidelines", Team Nirnaya, led by Vinay Babu Ulli, emerged as the winner for developing an AI-supported solution capable of automatically reading healthcare claim documents and assessing compliance. Team Khushi Singh and Ronit from IIIT Gwalior secured the runner-up position, while Team Vidal Health finished second runner-up.

In the "Radiological Image-Based Condition Detection and Report Correlation" category, Team BiltIQ AI, led by Harish Kumar, won first place. Team Kantaka Sodhana secured the runner-up position, while Team Arnold Sachith and Dr Smitha Rao placed second runner-up.

Under "Document Forgery/ Deepfake Detection", Team Sopa Claims, led by Praveen Sridhar and Snehal Joshi, was declared the winner. Team Forgensic from RGUKT-Nuzvid was runner-up, while Team Sushurutha Health AI secured the second runner-up position.

Winners received cash prizes of Rs 5 lakh, Rs 3 lakh and Rs 2 lakh, respectively.

ANCHORED ROOTS

Bengaluru boy sails from NR Colony to Navy's highest rank

ASRA MAVAD
BENGALURU, DHNS

For Basavanagudi's NR Colony, it is a moment of unprecedented glory. One of its own, Vice Admiral Krishna Swaminathan, has been named the next Chief of the Naval Staff.

NR Colony remains a key part of his journey, as Krishna spent a significant part of his growing-up years in this part of Bengaluru.

An alumnus of Bishop Cotton Boys' School, he studied at the institution till 1981 before moving to Sainik School in Bijapur. By Class 12, he had cracked the National Defence Academy (NDA) entrance examination in his first attempt and was eventually commissioned into the Indian Navy in 1987 at the age of 19.

Swaminathan's peers describe him as friendly, active and humble. "A year ago, I told him that he would become the next Navy chief, but Krishna, being as simple as he is, smiled it off. But we all knew he would make it," Bhavadeep Reddy, Swaminathan's neighbour in NR Colony and classmate while growing up, told *DH*.

The two continued to maintain a close friendship even after Swaminathan moved to Bijapur after Class 8. "Lalbagh was our favourite haunt as it was on the way from school to home. Krishna was always active. He was a sprinter. We would do all sorts of monkeying around in Lalbagh," he said, adding that Swaminathan continues to hold fond memories of Bengaluru and would like to move here after retirement.

Vice Admiral Krishna Swaminathan with the principal and past and present office-bearers of the Old Cottonians' Association at Bishop Cotton Boys' School on June 29, 2024.

Despite the high-pressure world of naval operations, the Vice Admiral remained a "Bengaluru boy" at heart. His friends in the city said he enjoyed outings to the iconic Koshy's on Residency Road, a tradition spearheaded by their father. His love for music of all genres knew no bounds.

Peers who knew him well into his naval career recall him as amiable. "I met him at the 2024 edition of the Old Cottonian of Eminence Award, which is considered the highest honour for Cottonians. He spoke about his memories of the school and also donated two model ships, which are currently on display at the school. He has been kind to the institution," Praveen Paul, who was the vice-chairman of the Old Cottonians' Association from July 2022 to June 2024, told *DH*.

West Asia conflict dims the big fat wedding glow

Decor costs rise as imported supplies run short

Wedding planners say rising costs have forced families to scale down celebrations. ISTOCK

ASRA MAVAD
BENGALURU, DHNS

The conflict in West Asia has brought with it a long list of problems that are hampering the business of wedding planners and disrupting the smooth operations of the wedding season in the city this year. As the costs of decorative items and raw materials continue to rise, big fat Indian weddings are not so "big" anymore.

As a direct impact of the rising costs, wedding guest lists and the number of events have dwindled, said Nimesh Chhag, co-founder of an event management company.

"Wedding costs are up by at least 30%. Adding to the rising costs is the problem of a labour shortage. Because of the elections, we were severely short of labour. As a result, we had to pull back on events that we could otherwise have taken up," he told *DH*, adding that similar trends were noticeable in both medium-scale and large-scale weddings in the city.

The luxury wedding market has been specifically hit by the dearth of imported florals and decor items, pushing customers to opt for more local and indigenous options.

"With businesses across the world suffering, our clients are walking a tight budget. A wedding with seven events in Bengaluru, which we had started planning more than a year in advance, had to be shortened, as the costs were exceeding 40% over what was initially budgeted," shared the representative of a Mumbai-based wedding agency.

Food seems to be the most impacted, but despite the rising prices, clients refuse to cut down on the food menu, wedding planners said.

"Food is integral to an Indian wedding. People are opting to cut down in other areas, but are paying an increased rate for the food. Many caterers and hotels are also providing replacements for items that otherwise require high gas consumption," said Aamina Azhar, proprietor of an event management company.

Winter weddings are likely to face a greater impact if the conflict continues, she said.

"Currently, because there is sufficient stock, sellers of decor items in the city have not exponentially hiked prices. But if imports do not resume, then as the stock depletes, one will see a much greater price hike during the winter wedding season," she added.

28-year-old factory worker ends life after live-in partner mocks his finances

BENGALURU, DHNS: A 28-year-old garment factory employee died by suicide after his live-in partner allegedly harassed him by repeatedly telling him to leave as he could not "maintain" her expenses. They lived in Rajagopalnagar.

The deceased has been identified as Thippeswamy C, a native of Chitradurga. Police said he had met Priyanka, a native of Davanagere, through Instagram. Both were working at the same garment factory and had been in a live-in relationship for the past two months.

Police said Thippeswamy's body was found hanging at their rented house on Friday evening when Priyanka returned from work. She alerted the police after finding him dead.

Investigations revealed that the couple had introduced themselves as husband and wife to the house owner before renting the house. Priyanka was reportedly married and had allegedly left her husband. She had become addicted to reels and was ignoring Thippeswamy.

According to a complaint filed by Thippeswamy's family, Priyanka allegedly subjected him to mental harassment and frequently asked him to move out, claiming he was unable to bear her expenses. Distressed over the alleged harassment, Thippeswamy allegedly took the extreme step, the complaint stated.

Based on the complaint, Rajagopalnagar police have registered a case of abetment to suicide, and further investigations are on.

Metro services unaffected

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) on Saturday withdrew its previous notification regarding the temporary suspension of services at two stations on the Purple Line.

The U-turn comes just a day after it had announced a scheduled maintenance block between Shri Balagangadhara Swamiji (Hosahalli) and Cubbon Park stations.

BMRCL confirmed that metro operations will now remain unaffected across the entire network. To accommodate a projected surge in ridership due to several high-profile events scheduled across the city, the corporation has further decided to advance the commencement of services.

Breaking away from the usual 7 am Sunday start, trains will begin operations at 5 am only on May 10.

◆ IN THE CITY ◆

GENERAL

Seminar on Finance Commission Reports: Inauguration by M Veerappa Moily; Chaired by Priyank Kharge; Sessions by S M Vijayanand and Chaya Devgaonkar; Karnataka Panchayat Raj Parishat; Gandhi Bhavan, Kumara Krupa Road; 10 am.

Awards Ceremony: Presentation of 'Smt. R. Kalyanamma' and 'Smt K T Banashankaramma' awards; Chaired by K Mohan Dev Alva; Awardees: Shantaraju and Hunasavadi Rajan; Akhila Karnataka Makkala Koota; Kote; 10 am.

Book Launch: Release of Kancha Ilaiah's 'Shudra Bandaya' (translated by Jayalakshmi B); Guests include Madhu Bangarappa, Kancha Ilaiah Shepherd, and A Narayana; Jeerunde; Sri Krishnaraja Parishat Mandira, Kannada Sahitya Parishat, Chamarajapet; 10.30 am.

School Naming Ceremony: KLE Society's CBSE English Medium School naming event; Guests: Pralhad Joshi, Rudrappa M Lamani, and Prabhakar B Kore; Chaired by Mahantesh S Koujalagi; KLE Society School, Rajajinagar; 4 pm.

Public Seminar: Discussion on 'Delimitation, Women's Reservation, and SIR'; Guest: Prashant Bhushan; Association for Protection of Civil Rights; Ashirvad Center, St Marks Road; 4.30 pm.

CULTURAL

National Art Festival: 'Namma Art Bengaluru'; Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath, Kumara Krupa Road; 10 am.

Dance Performance: 'Ullas-2026'; Guests: Chandra Jain and Deepa Shashidharan; Cornucopia Creations; Seva Sadan, Malleshwaram; 10 am.

Music & Titles: 'Vadya Vaibhava' concert and presentation of 'Vadya Kala Ratna' title to Mushnam V Raja Rao; Guest: Dr C N Manjunath; Performances by M A Sundareswaran (Violin) and Suresh Vaidyanathan (Ghatam); Bangalore Gayana Samaja, K R Road; 5.30 pm.

◆ CITY WEATHER ◆

FORECAST

Generally cloudy sky with light rain

TEMPERATURES

Maximum	32.2°C
Minimum	22.0°C
Rainfall (as of 8:30 am)	--
Humidity (as of 5:30 pm)	48%
Sunset (May 10)	6:36 pm
Sunrise (May 11)	5:56 am
Moonrise	0:08 pm
Moonset	11:50 am

(Relevant data recorded at 5.30 pm) Source: IMD

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ADVT.

Dr. M. Thimme Gowda, President of the Karnataka Pradesh Arya Idigara Sangha and **Chairman of Sri Sudha Co-operative Bank Ltd** along with his daughter **Sunitha Thimmegowda, Managing Trustee of Aditya Ram Foundation and Savitramma Thimmegowda Trust**, and son-in-law **Ashok Shankar, President of the All India Circus Federation, felicitated Her Royal Highness The Princess Aswathy Thirunal Gouri Lakshmi Bayi of the Travancore Royal Family** at the Taj West End, Bengaluru. The meeting also featured discussions on several social initiatives and collaborative efforts towards community welfare.

Advanced perinatology: A blessing for high risk pregnancies

Mother's Day May 10

Aster Hospitals' programme directors **Dr Gayathri Karthik Nagesh** (Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology) and **Prof (Dr) N Karthik Nagesh** (Paediatric Centres of Excellence) explain how pregnancies once considered high-risk are managed with better outcomes now with state-of-the-art technology and a multi-disciplinary approach

Dr Gayathri Karthik Nagesh

Prof (Dr) N Karthik Nagesh

Perinatology is among the fastest-growing niches in modern medicine, driven by a simple shift - more pregnancies today carry some degree of complexity. The reasons vary, but the outcome is clear. There is a growing need for specialised care that monitors the health of the mother, the foetus and, after delivery, both mother and child.

Pregnancy, birth and thereafter

Any pregnancy in which either the woman or the foetus faces a potential risk of an adverse outcome is termed high-risk. Such pregnancies are rising sharply. The causes may be maternal, foetal or placental.

A key factor is the increasing age at first pregnancy. As more women postpone childbirth for career or personal reasons, conditions such as hypertension and diabetes during pregnancy have become more common. At the same time, the use of assisted reproductive techniques such as IVF and ICSI has increased multiple pregnancies, which carry higher risks for both mother and babies.

Advances in healthcare have also changed who can conceive safely. Women with conditions that once precluded pregnancy, such as cardiac or renal disease, autoimmune disorders, or even those who have undergone organ transplants, can now conceive and carry pregnancies to viability. Many may also be on long-term medication for conditions such as epilepsy, hepatitis B or HIV, requiring close monitoring throughout pregnancy.

There are also rare but complex scenarios, such as a cancer diagnosis during pregnancy, where balancing maternal treatment and foetal safety becomes a multi-disciplinary challenge.

Complications can arise at any stage during pregnancy, at delivery or postpartum. These may include haemorrhage, convulsions, cord prolapse or shoulder dystocia. In short, pregnancy is a long journey that can become complicated at multiple points.

Perinatology addresses this by offering integrated, multi-disciplinary care. Obstetricians, foetal medicine specialists, neonatologists and other experts work together, often under one roof, to provide coordinated care. Just as importantly, they help anxious families navigate uncertainty with clarity and reassurance.

Foetus and baby care

Advances in foetal medicine have been significant. Many structural abnormalities can now be detected before birth, allowing doctors to plan interventions immediately after delivery. Conditions that once led to high mortality, such as trachea-oesophageal fistula, congenital diaphragmatic hernia and certain cardiac defects, can now be anticipated and managed with better outcomes.

The placenta, a vital organ that supports the foetus, can also present complications. Abnormal placement may lead to placenta praevia, while deeper attachment can result in conditions such as accreta, increta or percreta. These cases often require careful planning, including access to blood products at delivery.

Other placental issues may affect amniotic fluid levels - either too little (oligohydramnios) or too much (polyhydramnios) - and can contribute to foetal growth restriction or abnormal growth patterns. Such conditions demand close, continuous monitoring.

From a neonatal perspective, the progress has been equally striking. Prematurity remains the most common challenge. A few decades ago, survival at 36 weeks was uncertain. Today, babies born as early as 26 weeks are routinely cared for, with efforts advancing towards viability at 24 weeks.

Foetal growth issues, structural anomalies and functional conditions such as hydrops are now managed with increasing success, thanks to specialised expertise and improved technology.

Perinatal clinic at Aster CMI Hospital, Hebbal

Reflecting these advances, Aster CMI Hospital, Hebbal, has a dedicated perinatology clinic, aimed at addressing the growing need for specialised care. Scheduled to open formally on May 10, coinciding with Mother's Day, the clinic will focus on high-risk pregnancies where complications may affect the mother, baby or both.

The clinic will offer tailored care packages designed around individual needs. Its approach relies heavily on technology, including high-resolution imaging, advanced ultrasound, prenatal screening and, in some cases, in utero interventions.

A helpline will also support patients, enabling expecting mothers to seek timely guidance. Cases will be assessed in advance, relevant specialists consulted and a coordinated plan presented during the visit, ensuring both doctors and patients are aligned.

With perinatology, outcomes once considered improbable are increasingly achievable. Today, even babies with extremely low birth weight - sometimes as low as 500 grams - can be cared for successfully, reflecting how far the field has evolved.

DH Aster Hospitals

Aster CMI Hospital
43/2 New Airport Road
Sahakaranagar, Hebbal
Bengaluru 560 092
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Email: customercare.aster@asterhospital.in
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Sunday, 10th May, 2026 at 04.00 pm

Chief Guest
Shri Pralhad Joshi
Honourable Minister of New & Renewable Energy, Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Govt. of India

Guests of Honour

Shri Rudrappa M. Lamani
Honourable Deputy Speaker
Karnataka Legislative Assembly

Dr. Prabhakar B. Kore
Chancellor, KAHER, Belagavi
Chancellor, KLETECH, Hubballi

Smt. Arunaraje Patil
Filmmaker and Life Coach, Mumbai

President
Shri Mahantesh S. Koujalgi
President, KLE Society, Belagavi

You are cordially invited

Shri K. F. Patil Charitable Trust,
Ranebennur

Amit P. Kore
Chairman, Board of Management,
KLE Society, Belagavi

Boy from Belagavi's rural hinterland is all-India topper in IFS exam

ATHANI (BELAGAVI DIST), DHNS: Basavaraj Kempwad (25), a native of Savadi village in the taluk, has secured all-India first rank in the Indian Forest Service (IFS) 2025 exam, the results of which were announced by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) on Friday.

Basavaraj Kempwad

Basavaraj completed his PU education at Yallatti village in Jamkhandi taluk of Bagalkot district.

He pursued BSc in forestry at Sirsi in Uttara Kannada district. After that, he moved to Bengaluru and continued self study.

Sharing his happiness, Basavaraj said, "We are an agricultural family. I had a natural interest in forest conservation. That's why, I pursued BSc (forestry) and appplied for IFS examination. I was determined to succeed without joining any coaching centre. So, I stayed in Bengaluru, took a room there and studied independently in a library every day from 10 am to 12 midnight. Two years of continuous efforts yielded results".

"This was my second attempt at IFS examination. In my first attempt, I had not prepared enough and could not clear preliminary exam," he said.

"After completing training, I will join service and work for forest conservation and serve the people as per their expectations," Basavaraj said.

He said, for the past two years, he dedicated his entire time for studies and stayed away from social media. But Basavaraj made the most of the educational content available on YouTube for his preparations.

The topper said he dedicated this achievement to his parents, friends and teachers who guided him in his educational journey.

Basavaraj is disappointed that he could not pass IAS exam. He said he would continue pursuing his dream of passing it.

His elder brother Siddu, who works as a constable in the Mysuru city armed reserve police, expressed joy over Basavaraj's feat.

COUNTER MAGNET? Bureaucratic bottlenecks, hurdles by activists hit progress

Lack of clarity blurs plan for Mysuru as state's second IT hub

T R SATISH KUMAR
MYSURU, DHNS

The proposal in the state budget to make Mysuru the second IT city after Bengaluru has evoked mixed response from stakeholders.

Mysuru Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) president K B Lingaraju says the resources are adequate for the growth of industries and service companies, including IT, in Mysuru, the government machinery itself is a hurdle.

Founder of Association of Concerned and Informed Citizens of Mysuru (ACICM) and KPCC spokesman M Lakshmana said Chief Minister Siddaramaiah had big plans for the development of Mysuru and all stakeholders should join hands, for the progress of the city and the region.

LEAP

Electronics, Information Technology, and Biotechnology Minister Priyank Kharge said, "Mysuru is already a cluster under the Local Economy Accelerator Programme (LEAP). We are also setting up an electronics manufacturing cluster in Mysuru. Players like Kaynes are there. Startups are coming out of Mysuru. There are plans to run incubators and accelerators in Mysuru".

"The city already accounts for Rs 2,500 crore in IT exports. People are looking to establish nano Global Capability Centres (GCCs) there. There's demand for grade-A buildings. Keonics and Karnataka Innovation and Technology Society (KITS) have land available next to Infosys. There's also land available in Kochanahalli," Kharge said.

Resources

"Water availability from Kabini river and the presence of human resources and educational institutions are an advantage for Mysuru," the minister said.

Lakshmana said the proposal is part of the government's broader push to decentralise technology investments and promote the growth of new technology clusters in cities across Karnataka.

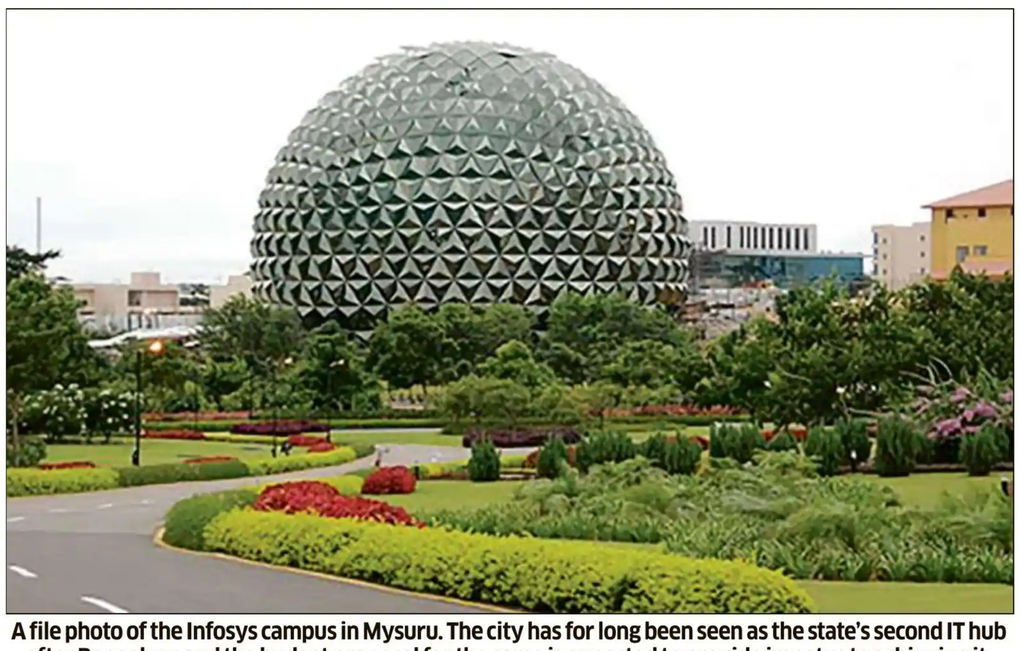
"The information technology ecosystem in Mysuru has already seen a steady growth. More than 30,000 employees are currently working in nearly 100 companies in Mysuru. Besides providing more jobs to the youth and facilitating the overall development of Mysuru, the move will ease congestion in Bengaluru and will strengthen economic activities beyond the capital," he said.

GCCs

Highlighting Karnataka's focus on Global Capability Centres (GCCs), Lakshmana said Karnataka was the first state in India to introduce a dedicated policy for the sector.

"Under the GCC policy, more than 550 such centres are operating in Karnataka. The government has a target to establish 500 new GCCs by 2029. The expansion of GCCs is expected to generate employment for around 3.5 lakh people and create an economic output of nearly $ 50 billion over the next few years," Lakshmana said.

Lingaraju said there will be problems if more companies are set up in Mysuru, but they also bring in more jobs and prosperity. "Already, vehicular traffic becomes horrible during weekends, extended weekends and holidays, due to high influx of tourists. More the footfall of people, the better it is for the economy," he said.



A file photo of the Infosys campus in Mysuru. The city has for long been seen as the state's second IT hub after Bengaluru and the budget proposal for the same is expected to provide impetus to achieving it.

Hurdles

"A major hurdle to development are activists in Mysuru. While implementing development projects, there is a lot of opposition to felling of trees by environmentalists. Recently, there was opposition to the construction of a stadium, a NIMHANS-like hospital, widening of roads, construction of flyovers, etc. Planned and upgraded infrastructure is required if activities increase in the city and surroundings. But if each project is opposed and delayed, it is difficult," he said.

He expressed suspicion about the proposal itself, citing corruption and lethargy in the government departments and agencies.

"If the government machinery is not responsive and encouraging, government policies will remain only on paper," he said.

Implementation the key

D Sudhanva, a pioneer in starting IT company Excel Soft in Mysuru 25 years ago, said a lot of things in the budget, including the proposal to develop Mysuru as an IT hub, were encouraging.

"Some startups are already receiving encouragement through the Karnataka Digital Economy Mission (KDEM), which is a good thing. But we will have to see how the new policies are implemented," he said.

Bhaskar Kalale, former chairman of the Mysuru chapter of Confederation of Indian Industry, said so far, there is only an announcement.

"We have not yet received any details. This cannot be a short-term plan. It cannot be done immediately, isn't it? Many existing industries are already suffering due to delay in expansion of the Mysuru airport. There is a need for a dedicated execution authority," he said.

Kalale said, "A vision and framework are required for at least two decades. The population of Mysuru city and the neighborhood will drastically increase. People will not stop buying vehicles. How far can the roads be widened? How about the increased requirement for office buildings, schools, colleges and fiber optic dedicated Internet access (DIA) or managed enterprise broadband networks?"

Niti Aayog all praise for 'Kalika Chetarike' initiative

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Niti Aayog has appreciated 'Kalika Chetarike', an initiative of the Karnataka government to address the learning gap created during Covid 19.

"Karnataka conceptualised and launched Kalika Chetarike as a learning recovery initiative aimed at addressing learning loss due to prolonged school closures during the Covid-19 pandemic. The programme redesigns classroom instruction for class 1 to 9 around clearly defined competencies rather than textbook-based syllabi, indicating a systemic shift towards competency-based learning (CBL)," a report of the Niti Aayog said. The report is titled 'School Education System in India: Temporal Analysis and Policy Roadmap for Quality Enhancement'.

The report further mentions: "The initiative emphasises that classroom instruction be focused on attaining subject-wise, grade-specific learning outcomes through activities. Kalika Chetarike has successfully made academics more joyful for students and helped improve classroom engagement and learning levels."

Due to the prolonged closure of schools during the pandemic, there was a huge learning gap among school children. The Department of School Educational Research and Training (DSERT) designed Kalika Chetarike, an activity-based learning to bring children back on the track. The activity books were designed by teachers through a series of workshops to cover specific learning outcomes aligned with grade-specific competencies. The programme promotes activity-based learning, encouraging active-participatory learning through group discussions, practical tasks and reflection-based learning in everyday classroom practice. It also includes a large-scale teacher training component undertaken by the DSERT. As many as two lakh teachers across the state were trained in activity-based learning, competency-based learning methods and assessment tools.

Interestingly, the report pointed out broad decline in learning outcomes across the country. A cluster of states/UTs including Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Delhi, Rajasthan, Haryana, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu have reported reductions across subjects.

In contrast, a larger group of states like Karnataka, Assam, Bihar, Chandigarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Maharashtra, Manipur, Mizoram, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and West Bengal recorded moderate decline, indicating that while learning levels fell, the extent of decline was less severe than the first group of states.

RAJYA VOKKALIGARA SANGHA ESTATE OFFICE
ನಂ. 148, "ನಾಡಪ್ರಭು ಕೆಂಪೇಗೌಡ ಭವನ", ಕೃಷ್ಣರಾಜೇಂದ್ರ ರಸ್ತೆ, ವಿಶ್ವೇಶ್ವರಪುರಂ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು – 560 004.

Ref. No.RVS/EO/172/2026-27 Dated: 08-05-2026

TO-LET (E-AUCTION ONLY)

Rajya Vokkaligara Sangha, Bengaluru, has Invited E-Auction Public Notice for Renting the Entire DJCC Building as one unit Located in Hudson Circle, Bengaluru-02 on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS". The Auction No: RVS/2026-27/AUCTION2 Dated: 08-05-2026 and Last Date is 18-05-2026. For more details visit KPP Portal Website: http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in

Sd/- President RVS | Sd/- Vice President RVS | Sd/- General Secretary RVS
Sd/- Joint Secretary RVS | Sd/- Treasurer RVS | Sd/- Chairman Works Committee | Sd/- Estate Officer RVS

TENDER NOTICE

DoubleTree by Hilton Bengaluru Whitefield

DoubleTree by Hilton Bengaluru Whitefield (Unit of Kalyani Hospitality Services Private Limited) invites sealed tenders from reliable and established manufacturers and vendors from Bengaluru and around Bengaluru city area on rate contract basis for 12 months commencing from **1st JUNE 2026 to 31st MAY 2027** for the supply of following:

Sl. No.	Food & Beverage General Items & Services
01	Fresh Vegetables Local
02	English Vegetables
03	Fruits Local & Imported
04	Fresh Milk & Milk Dairy Products
05	Cheeses Local and Imported
06	Frozen Green Peas, Corn & Frozen Veg.
07	Ice Cream
08	Sweets, Savouries, Bread and Pastries Items
09	Local Groceries, Pulses, Spices, Tins & Bottled Items
10	Imp. Groceries and Bakery Ingredients
11	Dry Fruits & Nuts
12	Poultry & Eggs
13	Yogurt, Noodles, Chapati & Other food items.
14	Mutton and Meat Items
15	Fresh Fish & Sea Food
16	Cold Cuts, Frozen Meat & Frozen Sea Food
17	Office Stationery
18	Printing Stationery & Flex printing
19	Cleaning Supplies and Tissue Paper Products

Tender Forms and other particulars can be obtained on payment of **Rs.500/-** each and are available with the Purchase Manager at the hotel **between 10 am to 5 pm.** The last date of submitting the tenders is **16th MAY 2026.** The tender is subject to:
1. The rates finalized for twelve months will not change under any circumstances.
2. The rates must be inclusive of delivery charges till our receiving premises; GST should be shown separately on the invoices, if applicable.
3. The hotel reserves the right to reject any or all tenders without any reasons whatsoever and no representation shall be entertained on this account.
Sealed tenders must be clearly mentioning on the Envelope the item/Services and be addressed to the Attention of:

Purchase Manager,
DoubleTree by Hilton Bengaluru Whitefield,
Kalyani Platina Tech Park, EPIP Zone, ITPL Main Road, Whitefield, Bengaluru 560037.
Contact details: **Mr. Mahesh B** – Purchase Manager
Mobile: +91 6366435028

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
RCD, ROAD DIVISION, MANOHARPUR, JHARKHAND
e-Procurement Notice
For National Competitive Bidding

e-Tender Reference No. RCD/MANOHARPUR/02/2026-27, **Date-09.05.2026**

1	Name of the work	Reconstruction/Strengthening of Goilkera (On Chaibasa-Saitwa road MDR-186) to Roam via Kentar, Kara, Khajuria (Total Length 0.00 k.m. to 22.00 k.m.) Under Road Division, Manoharpur.
2	Estimated Cost of Work (in INR)	Rs 64,31,62,808.60 (Rupees Sixty four Crore Thirty One Lakh Sixty Two Thousand Eight Hundred Eight and Sixty Paise Only)
3	Initial Bid Security (Rs In Lacs)	Rs 64.32 Lakh (Rupees Sixty Four Lakh Thirty Two Thousand only).
4	Initial Bid Security in the shape of	Initial Bid Security - As per SOP issued by Information Technology and e-Governance Department, Govt. of Jharkhand vide Letter No.120, Dt. 03.10.2023
5	Cost of Bidding documents	Rs 10,000.00 (Rs Ten Thousand) only.
6	Time of Completion	15 (Fifteen Months)
7	Date of Publication of Tender on website	14.05.2026 at 12.30 P.M.
8	Start date of bidding	14.05.2026 from 12.30 P.M.
9	Last date & Time for online bidding	04.06.2026 up to 02.00 P.M.
10	Type of Bid	Two envelope mode (Technical and Financial Bid)
11	Last date & time for receipt of Bid Security and other documents in Online form	04.06.2026, 02.00 P.M Through e-tendering portal www.jharkhandtenders.gov.in As per SOP issued by Information Technology and e-Governance Department, Govt. of Jharkhand vide Letter No.120, Dt. 03.10.2023
12	Date & time for opening of Technical Bid	05.06.2026 at 03.30 PM by Chairman e-Procurement Cell,Room No. 330 A, 3 rd Floor, Road Construction Department, Jharkhand Mantralaya, Dhurwa, Ranchi-834004.
13	Date & Time of Pre Bid Meeting	21.05.2026 on 12.30 P.M. At Office of the Chief Engineer (Communication), Road Construction Department, Engineers Hostel No.2, Dhurwa, Ranchi-834004
14	Name & address of office Inviting tender	Executive Engineer, RCD, Road Division, Manoharpur.
15	Contact no. of Procurement officer	7903255234
16	Helpline number of e-Procurement cell	0651-2401010

Above information are only indicative. Detail NIT & SBD published on Tender portal shall be final and mandatory.Details can be seen on website http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in

Executive Engineer,
RCD, Road Division,
Manoharpur.

PR 379430 West Singhbhum(26-27)

Appx.
(Ref. Para 1 of ASC Centre (S)/letter No. Accts/1559/Cont/PRI Dt. 08th May 2026

TENDERING OF REGIMENTAL SHIOPS

1. Sealed tenders are invited from interested War Widow / Widows of def pers killed while on **duty / Disabled Soldiers / ESM & Spouses / Widows of ESM subject to license pd of 3 years (extn upto 5 years)** for running of **Regt Shop at ASC Centre (South), Agram Post, Bengaluru-560007**

Sl. No.	Name of Shop	No. of Shop	Area Sqft.	Loc	EMD
1.1	E-Seva Kendra (Passport, Online Registration, Xerox/ Color Printouts, Stamp Paper/ Agreement, Travel Service, Electrician/Plumbers Service, Luggage Transfer Service/Porter	01	194	Shopping Complex ASC Centre (South)	1,500/-

2. Application form incl terms & conditions can be obtained from ASC Centre (South) at the cost of Rs. 100/- each as under :
2.1. Collection of Form : 10 May 2026 to 23 May 2026
2.2. Last date of submission : By 12.30 hrs on 24 May 2026
3. Queries, if any, may be clarified on Tele No. 080-29900365

Published by
ASC Centre (South)

कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय
ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, कार्य प्रमण्डल, डालटनगंज

अल्पकालीन पुर्न ई–निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना संख्या –
10RV / 2024–25/EE/RWD/DALTONGANJ दिनांक–07.05.2026

1. कार्य का नाम :

क्र 0	आईडेन्टी फिकेशन संख्या / पैकेज संख्या	प्रखंड		कार्य का नाम	प्राक्कलित राशि (लाख में) अंक में	अक्षर में	कार्य समाप्ति की अवधि	टेण्डर कॉल नं0
1	RWD/DALTONGANJ/STPKG/14/23-24	विश्रामपुर	1	L024 पी0डब्लू0डी0 रोड से बघमनवा तक पथ का सुदृढ़ीकरण कार्य । 2.90कि0मी0	1228.564	बारह करोड़ अठाईस लाख छप्पन हजार चार सौ रू0 मात्र	15 माह	छठा
		विश्रामपुर	2	पिपरा से निमिया तक पथ का सुदृढ़ीकरण कार्य । 1.80कि0मी0				
		विश्रामपुर	3	L035 पी0डब्लू0डी0 रोड से टोना तक पथ का सुदृढ़ीकरण कार्य । 3.30कि0मी0				
		विश्रामपुर	4	L075 पी0एम0जी0एस0वाई0 रोड सुलुदाग से लोहदगा तक पथ का सुदृढ़ीकरण कार्य । 5.50कि0मी0				
		विश्रामपुर	5	कुल्ही से पंचायत भवन भाया करकट्टा बाजार तक पथ का सुदृढ़ीकरण कार्य । 2.00कि0मी0				
		विश्रामपुर	6	मेन रोड एन0एच0 98 से चेनया चारमुहान रामधीर दुबे एवं बैजनाथ हाउस भाया लभझी नदी तक पथ का सुदृढ़ीकरण कार्य । 1.40कि0मी0				
		विश्रामपुर	7	महुगांवा मेन रोड से कांती तक पथ का सुदृढ़ीकरण कार्य। 2.50कि0मी0				
		विश्रामपुर	8	मोदा सिंह के घर से बक्सा कजरू खूर्द तक पथ का सुदृढ़ीकरण कार्य। 3.00कि0मी0				

2. बेवसाईट में निविदा प्रकाशन की तिथि : 14.05.2026
3. ई–निविदा प्राप्ति की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय : 27.05.2026 up to 5.00 PM
4. निविदा खोलने की तिथि एवं समय 29.05.2026 पूर्वाह्न 3.30 बजे
5. निविदा आमंत्रित करने वाले पदाधिकारी का नाम एवं पता : कार्यपालक अभियंता, ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, कार्य प्रमंडल, डालटनगंज ।
6. ई–निविदा प्रकोष्ठ का दूरभाष सं0 –06562357595
विस्तृत जानकारी के लिए वेबसाईट Jharkhandtenders.gov.in में देखा जा सकता है ।

कार्यपालक अभियंता
ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, कार्य प्रमंडल, डालटनगंज

PR 379376 Rural Development(26-27)#D

QUAD CABLE AUGMENTATION AND RESTORATION WORK

E-Tender Notice No. N-2025-26-TSK-NIT-39; Dated: 05-05-2026. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: **SN. 1**; **E-Tender No.:** N-2025-26-TSK-T-39. **Brief Description of Work:** QUAD cable augmentation and restoration work for effective working of media redundancy in Tinsukia Division. Tender Value: ₹2,48,36,965.07; Earnest Money: ₹2,74,200.00; E-tender will be **closed** at 15:00 hrs. on 29-05-2026 and **Opened** after 15:00 hrs. on 29-05-2026. The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available in website www.ireps.gov.in.

DRM (S&T), Tinsukia
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
"Serving Customers with a smile"

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY
E-Procurement Tender Notice No. SWR/W/TS/USFD/2026/04/E
Dated: 06.05.2026
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, Invites E-Tenders for the following works:

Item of work	Approx. Value
Ultrasonic Testing of Rails & SEJs in Bengaluru Division. **(E-tender No. SWR-SBC-USFD-RAIL-202602)**	Rs. 1,29,45,380/-

Last date for submission of bids: **Upto 15:00 Hrs. on 04.06.2026**
For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in

Dy. Chief Engineer/
Track Procurement/HQ/Hubballi
PUB/101/AAMO/PRB/SWR/2026-27

Download the **RailOne** app for easy ticket booking, PNR status, and more railway services.
South Western Railway - SWR | SWRRLY | SWRAILWAYHQ | sw_railways

CENTRAL RAILWAY
SOLAPUR DIVISION
LOOP LINE WORKS

The Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer (TRD), Central Railway, Solapur, for and on behalf of the President of India invites online e-tenders on Railways e-procure-ment website **www.ireps.gov.in** from reputed, experienced & licensed Electrical contractors for the following works. **Tender No. SUR/TD/T/2026/13 Name of Work:** Electrical TRD portion of work in connection with Conversion of loop line in common loop line where favourable crossover is available. 1.Savalgi 2.Kulali 3.Dudhni 4.Boroti 5.Malikpeth 6.Angar 7.Wakav 8.Bhalwani 9.Jinti Road 10.Bhigvan **Estimated cost:** ₹1,91,73,551.90/- **Bid Security:** ₹3,83,500.00/- **Completion Period:** 12 months **Validity of offer:** 60 **Days Date & time of tender closing on website:** 04.06.2026 at 15:00 hours.

Sr. DEE (TRD)

TRAVEL SAFELY, AVOID FOOTBOARD TRAVELLING 20

South East Central Railway
Tender Notice for Welding Works

Srl. No. (1) E-Tender No.DRM-ENGG-BSP-T-51-26-27, Date: 06/05/2026.
Work: Welding of rail joints with mobile flash butt welding plant under the jurisdiction of Sr. DEN/Central , Bilaspur. **Tender Value** (In Rs.): ₹ 5,31,43,933.24/-, **EMD** (In Rs.): ₹ 10,62,900.00/- , **Completion Period:** 18 Months.
Start date of Submission of Tender: From 11.00 hrs. on 19-05-2026, **Last date of Submission of Tender:** Upto 11.00 hrs. on 02-06-2026. The complete information of above e-Tender. Notices is available over websites **https:// www.ireps.gov.in** Bids other than e-bids shall not be accepted against above Tenders.

Divl. Railway Manager (Engg.)
S.E.C.Railway, Bilaspur
CPR/10/FL/99
South East Central Railway @secrail

CENTRAL RAILWAY
SOLAPUR DIVISION
ENGINEERING WORKS

DRM (W)'s, Central Railway, Solapur on behalf of the President of India invites E-tender from the reputed firms/ Contractor for the following work. **E-Tender Notice No: 12-2026-SrDENCo. Name of work:** Widening of Cuttings in semi ghat section from km 319/0 to 321/0 = 2.0 km UP side to avoid boulder falling on track in DD-KWV section (Total=2.00Km) and provision of Side Drain under ADEN (BG)KW. 2. Widening of Cuttings from km 548/8-549/9 = 1.1 km UP side from km 557/850-558/150 = 0.3 km UP and DN (total 0.6km), from Km 564/050-564/550 = 0.5 km UP side, (Grand Total 2.2km) to avoid boulder falling on track in KUI-WD section and Provision of Side Drain under ADEN/KLBG. **Approximate cost of work:** ₹12,20,56,604.21/- **Earnest Money:** ₹ 24,41,100.00/- **Completion period of the work:** 12 (Twelve) **Months Maintenance Period**: 6 (Six) Months **Cost of Tender form:** NIL **Date and time for submission for tender on www.ireps.gov.in website**: 26.05.2026 up to 15:00 hrs. **Date and time of opening of tender on www.treps.gov.in** 27.05.2026 after 15:30 hrs **Website particulars: www.ireps.gov.in Note** : The Prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website frequently before the date of closing of tender to note any change/corrigendum issued for this tender website : **www.ireps.gov.in**

DRM (WORKS)

TRAVEL SAFELY, AVOID FOOTBOARD TRAVELLING 23

PUBLIC NOTICE

The general public are hereby notified that my Clients **1. Sri.Chikkanarasimaiah S/o. Late. Kariyappa, aged about 68 years, 2. Smt. Hombakka W/o. Chikkanarasimaiah, aged about 63 years, 3. Smt. Lakshmidevi D/o. Chikkanarasimaiah, aged about 48 years, 4. Sri. Nagaraju S/o. Chikkanarasimaiah, aged about 46 years, 5. Smt. Shashikala W/o. Nagaraju, aged about 42 years, 6. Kum. Punith S/o. Nagaraju, aged about 18 years, 7. Kumari. Lakshmi D/o. Nagaraju, aged about 16 years, minor represented by father/natural guardian Sri. Nagaraju, guardian Sri. Nagaraju, 8. Sri. Murthy S/o. Chikkanarasimaiah, aged about 44 years, 9. Smt. Mamatha W/o.Murthy, aged about 38 years, 10. Kum. Gurudev S/o.Murthy, aged about 17 years, minor represented by father/natural guardian Sri. Murthy, 11. Kumari. Monisha D/o. Murthy, aged about 15 years, minor represented by father/natural guardian Sri. Murthy, 12. Smt. Nagarathna D/o. Chikkanarasimaiah, aged about 42 years,** all are residents of Dyavalinganapalya Village, Hejjala Dakhle, Bidadi Hobli Ramanagara Taluk and District have cancelled/revoked the General Power of Attorney Executed in favour of Sri.Kariyappa S/o.Late.Chikkanna, Aged about 70 years, R/o: No.548 'Chandrodaya', 4th Main, West of Cord Road, 2nd Stage, Mahalakshmipuram, Bengaluru-560 086 in respect of the property mentioned below in the schedule, which was registered as document No.RMN-4-00109-2014-15, in Book No.4, registered in the office of Sub-Registrar - Ramanagara, dated: 21/06/2014 is hereby revoked/cancelled and terminated with immediate effect.

Hence, the said Sri. Kariyappa, S/o Late Chikkanna, has no manner of right, authority or interest to deal with the schedule property mentioned below.

Any transaction undertaken by him on and from 08/05/2026 in respect of the schedule property shall be treated as null, void and not binding on my clients.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the Agricultural dry land measuring to an extent of 12 guntas in Sy. No.66/20 situated at Hejjala Village, Bidadi Hobli, Ramanagara Taluk & Ramanagara District (Now Bengaluru South District) and bounded on : **East by:** Land of Narasimhamurthy, **West by:** Land of Narasimaiah, **North by:** Land of Chikkarevanna & Dasappa, **South by:** Land of Chikkanarasimaiah.

A.R.T. ASSOCIATES, Advocate
No.102, 1st Floor, Amar Tower, 1st Cross, Gandhinagar, Bengaluru-560009.
Mob: 8050214208, 9738888893
Email: ebenezerthomas1@gmail.com
Date: 09.05.2026

K'taka seeks Rs 100 cr from Centre to relocate villages in protected areas

Lack of funds major hurdle for relocation

BENGALURU, DHNS

In a measure that will finally bring relief to families that have agreed to relocate outside protected areas, the state government has proposed to the Union government to release Rs 100 crore for the voluntary relocation of families currently living inside protected areas.

The state steering committee for Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA), chaired by the chief secretary, recently cleared the Forest Department's annual plan of operation for 2026-27 with a total outlay of Rs 416.12 crore.

Under the CAMPA rules, funds are collected from agencies that seek the diversion of forest land. Accordingly, Karnataka's funds have reached Rs 1,300 crore. However, the funds cannot be utilised without the approval of the CAMPA executive committee under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

Voluntary relocation is considered a win-win situation by authorities who have hailed it as an effective instrument in reducing man-animal conflict while simultaneously improving the livelihood of the relocated families by facilitating their integration into the mainstream.

The Centre's executive committee, however, had rejected the state government's demand for a mere Rs 10 crore in the previous financial year to relocate 67 families. The reason for rejection was the lack of details of "approval under which the activity was approved."

To a question, CAMPA executive committee chief executive officer Anand Mohan told *DH* that the state has to provide details as per the guidelines issued by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA).

"We have communicated in clear terms that the state should provide all the details regarding voluntary relocation as laid down in the NTCA guidelines. The only additional requirement is the clearance from the state steering committee," he added.

To a question, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (CAMPA) A Radha Devi said all the necessary details were submitted with the proposal, but the reason for the rejection was unknown.

"This time, we are submitting a comprehensive proposal with all the granular details in the hope that there would be no reason for the rejection of the proposal," she added.

Lack of funds has become a major roadblock for the programme, even as hundreds of families have asked for relocation. The issue came to the fore last year when an elephant in Kudremukh National Park trampled to death two men waiting for relocation for a year.

Feb 24 incident: Azim Premji varsity suspends student for 2 yrs

It is punishing victims instead of perpetrators, say peers

BENGALURU, DHNS

Students at Azim Premji University gathered at 'The Hinge' on Friday to protest the two-year suspension of a peer.

Tension gripped the Azim Premji University (APU) campus in Sarjapur here after a student was handed a two-year suspension in connection with the violence that broke out on the campus on February 24.

Two other students have been issued written warnings. The move sparked immediate outrage on Friday, with dozens of students staging a sit-in outside the registrar's office, demanding the revocation of what they termed an "arbitrary and disproportionate" punishment.

The suspension follows an inquiry conducted by a special disciplinary committee into the events of February 24, when alleged ABVP-linked rioters forcibly entered the university premises, vandalised property and assaulted students over a planned discussion on the Kunan Poshpora mass rape atrocity in Kashmir.

According to an email sent by the registrar's office on Thursday, the student was found guilty of "defiance of institutional processes," "misrepresenting facts," and "failing to de-escalate a volatile situation." The order said that the student's re-admission after two years would be subject to a future review.

By 2 pm on Friday, over 40 students gathered at 'The Hinge,' a popular campus hub, raising slogans against the administration. The protesters marched to the registrar's office, but were blocked by security personnel.

"The university is punishing victims instead of perpetrators," said a student protester.

"The February incident was an external attack. How can a student be suspended for two years for failing to 'de-escalate' a mob that entered our campus forcefully?"

Students said the timing of the suspension email, sent late on Thursday, was a strategic move to minimise the student body's window for collective response. Students warned that the protest will escalate if suspension is not withdrawn.

The APU student council has since sent a report to the university leadership, highlighting lack of transparency. They claimed the findings of the special disciplinary committee were not shared with the affected student.

The controversy stems from a 'Reading Circle' event in February disrupted by alleged ABVP attackers, claiming the discussion was "anti-national."

Since the incident, complaints have been lodged both against the rioters and certain students by the university administration.

While the attackers faced bailable charges related to trespass and vandalism, some students were booked under non-bailable provisions of the Information Technology Act, 2008, and Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, including allegations of voyeurism and accusations that the discussion was intended to incite religious outrage.

University's statement

The university conducted a thorough inquiry into the events of 24 February 2026. Following a careful review of the investigating committee's recommendations, the university has taken disciplinary action against three students found to be in serious violation of the code of conduct. One student has been suspended for two years, while the other two have been issued written warnings, said a spokesperson of Azim Premji university.

CELEBRATING THE SITAR

More than 50 artistes play sitar in unison at a programme titled 'Mysuru Sitar Sambhrama', in Mysuru on Saturday. Renowned Hindustani vocalist Pandit Venkatesh Kumar (not in picture) also peformed on the occasion.

Five-month-old girl mauled to death by stray dog in Bidar village

HUMNABAD (BIDAR DISTRICT), DHNS

A five-month-old baby was mauled to death by a stray dog that pounced on her inside her house in the wee hours of Saturday at Dubalgundi village in Humnabad taluk of Bidar district.

Shivani, the daughter of Siddappa and Sudha couple, suffered multiple bite injuries. She failed to respond to treatment and died hours later at Bidar Institute of Medical Sciences (BRIMS).

Sudha let her baby sleep in the hall of the unlocked house and engaged herself in daily chores. A stray dog barged into the house and pounced on the baby. When she heard the baby scream she ran out only to find multiple bites on the baby's body. The baby was rushed to the BRIMS, where it succumbed to wounds.

The incident sparked outrage among villagers, who expressed their anguish against the apathy of local body officials in addressing the street dog menace. They demanded suitable compensation to the family of the deceased child.

Expressing his deep sorrow and condolences to the family of the victim of the dog attack, district incharge Minister Eshwar Khandre directed the district administration to provide compensation to the family. He instructed the administration to take necessary measures to curb dog menace.

Vijay to take oath as TN chief minister today

Vijay, From Page 3

About eight to nine MLAs — senior leaders such as N Anand, K G Arunraj, K A Sengottaiyan, Aadhav Arjuna, and C T R Nirmal Kumar — are likely to be sworn in as ministers along with Vijay.

There is still little clarity on whether the Congress, which is likely to be allotted two berths, will join the ministry immediately or after the floor test when the chief minister is likely to expand his Cabinet.

This will be Tamil Nadu's first coalition government since Independence, though the state has thrown up hung Houses in the past. The Congress will taste power in the state for the first time since 1967, when it was overthrown by the then-fledgling DMK. In 1952, C Rajaji led a minority government in the then-Madras Presidency, and in 2006, DMK chief M Karunanidhi did the same after his party failed to win enough seats to command a majority on its own.

Vijay will be the first Christian and fourth cinema star to be sworn in as the chief minister after M G Ramachandran, his wife V N Janaki, and J Jayalalithaa.

The day saw hectic developments as the VCK, whose chief Thol Thirumavalavan was reportedly untraceable for hours at a time, dithered on the decision multiple times. Reports indicated that an alternate arrangement of projecting Thirumavalavan as the chief minister with support from the DMK and the AIADMK was discussed, but things eased after former Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami extended his wishes to the new government.

A little after 4.30 pm, Thirumavalavan handed over the letter of support to TVK senior leader Aadhav Arjuna, who jumped ship from his party a year ago, following which Vijay began his journey to the Lok Bhavan—his fourth visit in as many days.

By this time, the IUML sprang a surprise by extending "unconditional support", but there was a hitch: the Governor had not yet allotted time to the TVK delegation. However, within minutes, Vijay's convoy took a U-turn to the Lok Bhavan after the Governor granted him an appointment; this time, he was accompanied by leaders of the alliance parties.

Around the same time, DMK chief M K Stalin said his party would serve as a constructive opposition and welcomed the stand of allies who backed the TVK to avoid a crisis.

Though he extended support to the TVK, Thirumavalavan maintained that there was no change in his stand that Vijay was "the RSS's child" and stated his support was only to form a government.

"We wanted to prevent the imposition of President's Rule in Tamil Nadu and that is the reason we have extended our support to the TVK. Our alliance within the DMK-led Secular Progressive Alliance will continue," he added.

The positive development was also preceded by allegations of horse-trading by the AMMK led by T T V Dhinakaran, which was denied by the TVK. The party's lone MLA, S Kamaraj, allegedly signed a support letter inside a car, which was sent to the Governor. The MLA signing the letter was also filmed by the TVK, which released it to deny allegations of horse-trading.

The incident came to light after the Lok Bhavan sought a clarification from Dhinakaran, who said his party's support was only for the AIADMK. He alleged that the letter was forged and filed a complaint with the police.

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Lt Gen Subramani new CDS...

Navy Chief, From Page 3B

Vice Admiral Swaminathan, an alumni of Bishop Cottons Boy's School, Bengaluru and Sainik School, Bijapur in Karnataka's Vijayapura, was commissioned on July 1, 1987.

Currently, he is the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Western Naval Command. Earlier, he served as the Vice Chief of the Navy and was the second skipper of aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya.

A specialist in communication and electronic warfare, Vice Admiral Swaminathan is an alumnus of National Defence Academy, Khadakvasla; the Joint Services Command and Staff College, Shrivenham, UK; the College of Naval Warfare, Karanja; and United States Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island.

In his naval career, the officer also commanded missile vessels INS Vidyut and Vinash; missile corvette INS Kulish and guided missile destroyer INS Mysore.

Lt Gen Raja Subramani, currently the Military Adviser, National Security Council Secretariat, was the Vice Chief of Army Staff from July 1, 2024 to July 31, 2025 – a period that includes Operation Sindoor - and was General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Central Command from March 2023 till June 2024. He joined the NSCS in September 2025.

In his four-decade-long career, Lt Gen Raja Subramani, an infantry officer, served across a wide spectrum of conflict and terrain profiles and tenanted a host of command, staff and instructional appointments, gathering expertise on Pakistan and China fronts.

He commanded 16 Garhwal Rifles in counter-insurgency missions in Assam as part of Operation Rhino, 168 Infantry Brigade in J&K and 17 Mountain Division in the central sector during a challenging operational environment.

Commissioned into the 8th Battalion of the Garhwal Rifles on Dec 14, 1985, he is an alumnus of Joint Services Command Staff College, Bracknell (UK), and National Defence College, Delhi. In addition, he holds an MA degree from King's College London and an M Phil in Defence Studies from Madras University, which gave him the reputation of a scholar-soldier.

BSY carved own path by struggle: Shah

Yediyurappa vows to strengthen BJP, bring it back to power

NRUPATHUNGA S K
CHITRADURGA, DHNS

Union Home Minister Amit Shah felicitates former chief minister B S Yediyurappa at 'BSY Abhimanotsava' event to mark 50 years of his political life in Chitradurga on Saturday. Seers of various mutts, Union Minister Pralhad Joshi and seers of various mutts are seen. DH PHOTO/SATISH BADIGER

A huge crowd throngs the venue of the programme organised to mark 50 years of Yediyurappa's public service.

Terming the day as historical for two reasons, Union Home minister Amit Shah said that the day BJP came to power for the first time in West Bengal, also marks the completion of 50 years of political life of B S Yediyurappa, who brought the party to power in South India for the first time.

Inaugurating the BSY Abhimanotsava organised by state BJP here on Saturday, the home minister said, "The name of Yediyurappa will be written in golden words in the history of BJP as he became the chief minister for four times and also brought the party to power in South India for the first time."

'Declined Cabinet berth'

Recalling an incident, Shah said, when Yediyurappa was offered a ministerial berth in the Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2014, Yediyurappa politely declined and said his first priority is Karnataka and he wants to bring BJP to power in Karnataka.

Stating that there are two types of leaders in politics, he said one set of leaders take the path that is already there and another set of leaders create their own path and make way for others. Yediyurappa belongs to the second set of leaders.

"With no political background, Yediyurappa started his political journey from Shikarpura and became chief minister of Karnataka four times. His commitment and the values instilled by the RSS helped him climb the ladder of success. He had built the party by touring Karnataka by bicycle," the home minister said.

He (BSY) had taken out padayatra across the state for the welfare of farmers and emerged as the leader of farmers. Yediyurappa was imprisoned in Shivamogga and Ballari during the emergency. Yediyurappa has contributed to the party significantly, Shah said.

> **AMIT SHAH**
> Union Home Minister
>
> "I have campaigned with Yediyurappa multiple times. I noticed that he kept a small diary in his pocket and noted down the names of those who met him and their problems. This was his way of connecting with people. Young and aspiring leaders should follow this practice.

On the presence of pontiffs and seers of various communities on the stage, Shah said, it shows how Yediyurappa brought people of various communities together through his works."I salute all seers here."

Referring to the first farm budget presented by Yediyurappa, he said not just farmers from Karnataka, even those across the country used to think that there is someone in the country who has concern for them. Yediyurappa, the BJP parliamentary board member, promised Amit Shah that he would travel across the state to connect with people, strengthen the party and bring it back to power in the state again.

Shah reiterates promise for Madakari Nayaka memorial

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday promised to erect a memorial to Chitradurga's valiant ruler Raja Madakari Nayaka.

"I had promised to build a memorial to Madakari Nayaka in Chitradurga while campaigning for the Assembly elections. But the Congress came to power. Don't worry. PM Narendra Modi is in power at the Centre, and our promise will be fulfilled," said Shah, who flagged off the BSY Abhimanotsava organised by the Karnataka BJP to mark former Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa's 50-year-long career in politics.

DH
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◆ WEATHER ◆

Overview: Dry weather prevailed over Coastal Karnataka, South Interior Karnataka and North Interior Karnataka

Forecast May 10: Rainfall to occur at few places over the state.

INTERIOR NORTH

Stations	Max	Min	Rain
Belagavi	35.2	21.8	00
Bidar	37.8	23.4	00
Vijayapura	37	22.5	00
Dharwad	37	22.5	00
Haveri	36.4	23.8	00
Kalaburagi	38.9	26.2	00
Raichur	36.6	25.8	00
COASTAL			
Honnavar	34.8	26.6	00
Karwar	36.6	26.7	00
Shirali	NA	NA	NA
Mangaluru	34.6	28	00

INTERIOR SOUTH

Stations	Max	Min	Rain
Agumbe	35.4	23.5	08
Bengaluru	33.2	22	00
Ballari	NA	NA	NA
Chamarajanagar	NA	NA	NA
Chikkamagaluru	NA	NA	NA
Chitradurga	35.5	24	00
Davangere	36.8	22	00
Hassan	NA	NA	NA
Mysuru	34.4	22	00
Madikeri	NA	NA	NA
Kolar	33.4	19.4	00

OTHER STATIONS

New Delhi	36.4	23.8	00
Kolkata	33.2	25.1	00
Mumbai	35.5	28.2	00
Chennai	32.8	25.5	04
Pune	39	23.8	00
Hyderabad	36.6	26.3	00
Th'puram	34.8	24	06

Payment defaulter HR agencies for govt may face blacklisting

NEW DELHI, DHNS

Manpower agencies and contractors providing human resources to ministries and departments may be blacklisted if they default on paying their contract employees, the Centre has warned.

Issuing fresh instructions, the Procurement Policy Division of the Department of Expenditure has directed all ministries and government enterprises to ensure that contractors disburse wages within the prescribed timelines. The Drawing and Disbursing Officers (DDOs) must also verify compliance every month.

According to officials, the instructions reiterate that under Section 55(3) of the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020, the principal employer (a ministry or any government enterprise) is responsible for ensuring that contractors pay wages on time.

The government has empowered principal employers to directly pay contract workers in cases of inordinate delay by contractors, with provisions for blacklisting and wider debarment action in repeat cases.

An amendment to the General Financial Rules (GFR), 2017, relating to 'Debarment from Bidding', has expanded the grounds for debarment of firms from government procurement.

"Under the revised framework, firms can now face debarment up to three years not only for corruption or integrity violations, but also for failure to pay wages to employees engaged under contracts and for failure to deposit statutory social security contributions under applicable labour laws where the procuring entity has had to step in and make such payments because of contractor default," officials said.

Invoking Section 17(1) of the Code on Wages, 2019, which prescribes timelines for payment of wages, the Office Memorandum has said daily wages should be paid by end of shift, weekly wages before weekly holidays, fortnightly wages within two days of the end of fortnight and monthly wages within seven days of the succeeding month.

The contractor has to make wage payments through bank transfer or electronic mode. They must electronically inform principal employers after payment while the contracts must contain penalty clauses for delayed wage payments.

It also said ministries must ensure adequate fund availability before awarding manpower contracts and procuring entities using GeM (Government e-Marketplace) or other platforms should block/earmark funds for outsourced manpower payments for the contract period or till the end of the financial year, whichever is earlier.

The instructions also mandate faster reimbursement cycles and contractors will have to submit bills by the 10th of every month after making wage payments, while DDOs have been directed to clear such bills by the 15th of the same month.

Suvendu takes oath as Bengal's first BJP CM

Adhikari, From Page 3B

The swearing-in coincided with the 165th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore. Modi and Adhikari paid tribute to the polymath's portrait on the podium.

Suvendu later visited the ancestral residence of Tagore in Jorasanko and paid tribute. "Our goal is to build a Sonar Bangla (Golden Bengal)," he said, quoting from Tagore's 'Amar Sonar Bangla (My Golden Bengal)' – now the national anthem of neighbouring Bangladesh.

Progress of all

"This government is committed to everyone living in the state. Development, employment generation, safety of women, protection of cultural dignity and safeguarding democratic rights will be our primary objectives."

Modi, Shah and Adhikari, as well as other BJP leaders, also paid homage at a makeshift memorial dedicated to over 300 BJP workers and supporters, who had been killed in political violence in the state.

Suvendu was a municipal councillor in Contai in the 1990s. He lost his first Assembly election in 2001 but won in 2006.

He helped Mamata organise a movement against the proposed acquisition of farmland by the then Left Front government for a chemical hub in 2006-2007.

The movement set the stage for the TMC's ascent to power in the state in 2011.

In 2009, he was elected to the Lok Sabha from Tamluk, defeating Lakshman Seth of the CPM.

He retained the seat in 2014. In 2016, he returned to state politics, winning Nandigram and becoming a minister in the Mamata-led government.

Exit from TMC

But the growing role of Mamata's nephew Abhishek Banerjee within the TMC eventually led to the exit of Suvendu, along with many of the other disgruntled leaders, from the party ahead of the Assembly elections of 2021. He emerged as the most prominent face of the BJP in West Bengal over the past five years.

Suvendu's father, Sisir Adhikari, served as a legislator and a parliamentarian of the TMC, as well as a Union minister of state. A few months after Suvendu, Sisir too quit the TMC and joined the BJP, along with his other sons, Dibyendu and Soumendu, who, too, have been members of the Assembly and the Lok Sabha.

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Iran Keeps US waiting on response to peace plan

Iran, From Flap

In an incident on Friday, a US fighter jet fired on and disabled two Iranian-flagged tankers that Washington accused of challenging its naval blockade of Iran's ports.

An Iranian military official told local media the country's navy had responded "to American terrorism with strikes" and that "the clashes have now ceased". The latest incident came after a previous flare-up overnight Thursday to Friday in the Strait of Hormuz. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio reiterated on Friday that it was "unacceptable" for Tehran to control the key oil route.

Washington has sent Iran, via Pakistani mediators, a proposal to extend the truce in the Gulf to allow for talks on a final settlement of the conflict launched 10 weeks ago with US-Israeli strikes on Iran.

ED arrests Sriki, two aides in bitcoin scam case

Sriki, From Page 3B

The Congress government formed an SIT in 2023 to investigate the case.

On Saturday, the accused were produced before a judge. During the hearing, the counsel for Sriki submitted medical records and argued the accused was suffering from mental health issues. However, the court declined to consider the plea and granted a 10-day custody of all the accused to the central agency for interrogation.

Sriki was nabbed from his Jayanagar residence near Ashoka Pillar.

The agency had recently conducted searches at the residence of Mohammed Harris Nalapad, an associate of Sriki, as a part of its probe into the alleged bitcoin scam and cyber-heist network.

However, Nalapad had claimed that he had no links with Sriki. The CID had earlier investigated Sriki and others in connection with the alleged hacking of online poker sites, crypto exchanges and other websites.

A separate case was also registered at Cottonpet police station over allegations of hacking gaming websites and procuring narcotic substances through the darknet using bitcoin.

Investigators suspect the accused used hacked digital wallets and online gaming applications, including rummy culture, to siphon off virtual assets and conceal the money trail.

According to officials, the ED is probing allegations related to the theft of Rs 11.5 crore from the Karnataka government's e-procurement portal, hacking of gaming websites, and laundering of proceeds through cryptocurrency exchanges abroad. The agency is also probing allegations that portions of the proceeds were used to purchase narcotics through darknet platforms.

The ED had earlier searched around 12 premises linked to the accused and their associates under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act.

Delhi on high alert after terror threat inputs

NEW DELHI, PTI: The national capital has been placed on high alert following intelligence inputs indicating a possible terror threat, prompting Delhi Police and other security agencies to intensify surveillance across sensitive locations, sources said on Saturday.

Security has been stepped up at the BJP headquarters on Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Marg and other key government establishments, with additional deployment of armed personnel, barricading and enhanced vehicle checks, a source said.

According to sources, agencies have received alerts about possible attempts to target prominent offices and crowded areas in central Delhi using suicide attacks, vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (IEDs), shootings and coordinated strikes.

Anti-sabotage checks are being carried out at important government buildings, political offices, markets, transport hubs and other high-footfall areas across the city, the sources said. Bomb disposal squads and quick reaction teams have been put on standby.

AT CROSSROADS | UT caught between political demands and national security priorities

Dialogue, distrust & geopolitics shape Ladakh's next phase

ZULFIKAR MAJID
SRINAGAR, DHNS

Cashmere goats graze at Rezang La pass in Ladakh. AFP FILE

With two nuclear-armed neighbours hostile to India — China and Pakistan — along its frontiers, Ladakh is entering a phase where security imperatives and political demands are unfolding in parallel, with no clear resolution in sight yet.

Nearly seven years after it became a Union Territory (UT), Ladakh sits at the intersection of domestic political demands and national security priorities.

While local groups continue to press for statehood and constitutional safeguards under the Sixth Schedule, the Central government's approach is also shaped by the region's location along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China and the Line of Control (LoC) with Pakistan.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah's recent visit to Ladakh reflected a calibrated outreach. He met local leaders and urged continued engagement, but did not indicate any shift on the core demands that have driven the agitation.

"Whenever a crisis came upon India from this border, the Army reached later; first, the people of Ladakh took bullets to their chests and protected the country," Shah said during his recent visit to the frontier region.

The Leh Apex Body (LAB) and the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA), which have jointly led the statehood movement, remain engaged but cautious. Both have reiterated that dialogue must lead to concrete outcomes, particularly on safeguards related to land, employment, and cultural identity.

"We are ready for meaningful dialogue, but our core demands are non-negotiable," said LAB Co-Chairman Chering Dorjay Lakruk, calling for a clear roadmap from the Central government.

In neighbouring Kargil, concerns have sharpened in recent weeks. "Any decision taken without wider consultation will only deepen mistrust," said Ladakh Congress president Asgar Ali Karbalai. "Safeguards for our identity and resources remain central to any resolution."

Political moves

The Central government's administrative push in Ladakh is unfolding alongside this political engagement. The decision to create five new districts has been presented as a step to improve governance in a geographically large and sparsely populated region, where access to services remains uneven.

Lieutenant -Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena has adopted a conciliatory approach, stating that development initiatives will be carried out in consultation with local stakeholders and emphasising the need for dialogue to address concerns. He has also highlighted priorities such as infrastructure, employment generation, water supply, and service delivery in remote areas.

The move to create new districts has, however, drawn mixed responses.

In Leh, a Buddhist-majority region, there is some support for administrative decentralisation, with sections viewing it as a way to improve service delivery.

In Kargil, which has a Shia Muslim majority, leaders have raised concerns about the basis and timing of the decision, saying it was taken without adequate consultation and could affect the region's administrative and political weight.

There are also apprehensions that the reorganisation may dilute Kargil's representation and disrupt the balance between the two regions, which had come together over common political demands.

Ladakh's position

These concerns come at a time when Ladakh's strategic profile remains high.

Since the 2020 standoff between India and China along the LAC, including the Galwan Valley clash, the region has seen continued military deployment and infrastructure development.

Ladakh also borders Pakistan-occupied Kashmir along the LoC, with areas such as Kargil and Drass having witnessed conflict in the past, including during the 1999 Kargil conflict.

Officials indicate that the Central government is likely to continue with a dual approach — advancing administrative measures while keeping dialogue open. There has been no indication so far of a change in position on granting statehood or Sixth Schedule status, with discussions expected to also include possible strengthening of existing local governance structures.

The release of activist Sonam Wangchuk after eight months of jail has contributed to a relative easing of tensions, though the demands raised by local groups remain unchanged.

At present, there is no escalation on the ground. The earlier phase of sustained protests has given way to a quieter period of engagement, with Ladakhi leaders preparing for the next round of talks with the Centre. They have indicated that issues related to land protection, employment and representation will remain central to the discussions.

Officials familiar with the process said the upcoming talks were expected to focus on narrowing differences and exploring interim measures, while broader political demands continue to be discussed.

For now, Ladakh remains in a phase of continued engagement, with dialogue underway but key questions over political status and constitutional safeguards yet to be resolved.

Game-changer TVK shows political naivety

E T B SIVAPRIYAN
CHENNAI, DHNS

Tamil Nadu Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar meets TVK chief Vijay in Chennai on Saturday. PTI

The Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), which is all set to form a coalition government in Tamil Nadu, has displayed political naivety multiple times since May 4, when the results were declared.

The first instance of its ineptness was on May 6, two days after the election results were announced, when TVK staked its claim to form the next government.

It is believed that K A Sengottaiyan had suggested that TVK stake its claim as the single largest party. However, other party leaders decided to attach a letter of support from five Congress MLAs, along with the resolution adopted by the TVK legislature party, to its letter to the Governor.

Sengottaiyan, who was with AIADMK for 52 years before joining TVK, is the only experienced leader in the party of greenhorns.

The governor demanded that TVK chief C Joseph Vijay demonstrate that he had a strength of 118 — the magic number in a house of 234. He had only 112.

The team met the governor again on May 7 without getting the numbers, only to be told to come back with the support of 118 MLAs. That was when the second blunder was made.

CPI and CPM leaders were shocked to get letters from TVK seeking support on WhatsApp.

"Sending a PDF copy of a letter... is not a joke. If they lacked experience, they should have spoken to veteran politicians," the leader of a political party approached by TVK said.

On Friday, Vijay visited Lok Bhavan for the third time in three days, this time falling two short of a majority. "They should have enlisted the services of constitutional lawyers and experts," a senior politician told *DH*.

Another error was that the first time Vijay met the Governor, he did not even present a flower bouquet as a courtesy.

"Etiquette is necessary in politics, and someone from Vijay's team should have arranged for a flower bouquet and a shawl for the Governor," a source said.

The icing on the cake was TVK releasing a video of AMMK's S Kamaraj signing the letter of support for the party inside a car.

Rangasamy is Puducherry CM

President Droupadi Murmu on Saturday appointed N Rangasamy as the chief minister of Puducherry, according to a government notification, reports PTI.

"The President is pleased to appoint N Rangasamy as the chief minister of the union territory of Puducherry with effect from the date he is sworn in," the notification from the Ministry of Home Affairs said.

Following this, L-G K Kailashnathan has invited Rangasamy to form the government, official sources said. The swearing-in ceremony is on May 13.

Modi, Shah pay tribute to slain cadres

Say their sacrifices will be source of strength

KOLKATA, PTI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi greets senior BJP worker Makhanlal Sarkar during the swearing-in ceremony of party leader Suvendu Adhikari at Brigade Parade Ground in Kolkata on Saturday. Sarkar was arrested in Kashmir in 1952 while accompanying Jana Sangh founder Syama Prasad Mookerjee during the movement to hoist the Indian tricolour there. PTI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday paid tribute to the hundreds of BJP activists killed in alleged atrocities by the Trinamool Congress in the last few years and said their sacrifices will be remembered as a source of strength.

A makeshift memorial for those saffron party workers killed was put up near the stage at Brigade Parade Ground, where the new government headed by Suvendu Adhikari was sworn in.

In the memorial, the names of "martyrs" and the districts they had hailed from were listed on a large board.

Sharing a photo of the memorial on his X handle, Modi said, "Tribute to the courageous BJP Karyakartas! Even in the midst of celebrations at the Brigade Parade Ground in Kolkata today on the formation of the first ever BJP Government in West Bengal, we remembered all those BJP Karyakartas who laid down their lives in the service of an ideal greater than themselves."

Their sacrifice is etched forever in the journey of the party, he said, adding: "Their courage will remain a source of strength for all of us."

Shah also said that this memorial "is stirring deep emotions in the hearts of every worker present at the oath-taking venue."

The sacrifice, struggle, and martyrdom of those noble souls are finally finding fulfilment today, he said in a post on X.

"Salutations to all those martyrs who dedicated their everything to the nation and the organisation," Shah said, sharing a video of the memorial.

BJP state president Samik Bhattacharya claimed that over 300 BJP workers had been killed by TMC goons in post-poll violence, particularly after the vote results were out in 2021.

"They were killed for daring to dream of ushering in change in Bengal. We cannot forget their sacrifices on this day," said Bhattacharya, a Rajya Sabha MP.

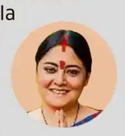
Meanwhile, the newly sworn-in chief minister, Suvendu Adhikari, said the Prime Minister had long wished to see a BJP government in West Bengal and described Saturday as the beginning of a new chapter in the state's politics.

INSIDE BENGAL'S NEW CABINET

DILIP GHOSH

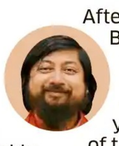
A former RSS pracharak, Dilip Ghosh (61) headed the West Bengal BJP from 2015 to 2021, overseeing its rise in the Assembly from three seats in 2016 to 77 in 2021. Ghosh had strained ties with Suvendu Adhikari after the latter joined the BJP from the TMC in 2020, but buried the hatchet before this year's Assembly polls.

AGNIMITRA PAUL



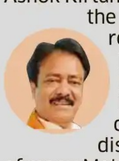
The daughter of a paediatrician, Agnimitra Paul studied botany before building a career as a fashion designer. She joined the BJP in 2019, became chief of the party's Mahila Morcha in 2020, and later rose to the post of state general secretary. The 51-year-old BJP state vice-president won from Asansol Dakshin.

NISHITH PRAMANIK



Once associated with the TMC, Nishith Pramanik (40) switched to the BJP ahead of the 2019 Lok Sabha elections and quickly emerged as a key saffron leader in North Bengal. After winning the Cooch Behar seat, he joined the Modi government in 2021 as a minister of state and the youngest member of the Union Council of Ministers. He won from Mathabhanga.

ASHOK KIRTANIA



A prominent Matua leader, Ashok Kirtania (52) represents the Dalit Hindu refugees with roots in erstwhile East Pakistan. Despite concerns over the disenfranchisement of many Matuas during SIR, his victory shows continued support of Matuas for BJP.

KSHUDIRAM TUDU

A Santhal leader and former teacher, Kshudiram Tudu emerged as a prominent BJP face in the Jangalmahal region and played a role in expanding the party's tribal support base. Tudu (55) took oath in Santhali.

Bengal's SIR man, another IAS officer become CM's close aides

KOLKATA, DHNS: The new chief minister of West Bengal, Suvendu Adhikari, has appointed retired bureaucrat Subrata Gupta, who oversaw the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls in the state, as his advisor.

The notification for the appointment of the retired IAS officer of the 1990 batch as the advisor to the chief minister was issued just a few hours after Adhikari took over the helm of the state government.

Gupta was appointed by the Election Commission as the Special Roll Observer on November 30, 2025, to oversee the SIR exercise in West Bengal.

Gupta remained a special observer during the two-phase polling in the state.

The new BJP government also appointed Shantanu Bala, an IAS officer of the 2017 batch, as the chief minister's private secretary.

Bala was the additional district magistrate of South 24 Parganas before being given the latest assignment.

The SIR exercise in West Bengal led to the deletion of about 91 lakh names from the lists of voters ahead of the just-concluded Assembly elections.

The Trinamool Congress had accused EC of giving electoral advantage to BJP, which in turn had claimed that the roll revision was necessary to remove the dead and duplicate voters.

PLUM POSTS

- **Subrata Gupta, a retired IAS officer of the 1990 batch, oversaw the SIR of the electoral rolls in the state**
- Shantanu Bala, who was the ADM of South 24 Parganas district, has been named chief minister's private secretary

Mamata calls for Opposition unity against BJP

KOLKATA, DHNS

Mamata Banerjee pays tribute to Rabindranath Tagore on his birth anniversary in Kolkata. PTI

Trinamool Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee on Saturday urged all political parties to unite against BJP.

Her call for unity came on a day her aide-turned-adversary, Suvendu Adhikari, succeeded her as the chief minister of the state.

"I call upon all opposition parties, including the Leftists and the ultra-Leftists, to come together to form a joint platform against BJP," said the AITC chairperson.

"It is not the time to think that the enemy's enemy is my friend. Our first enemy is BJP," she added, as she reached out to the Congress, CPM and other Left parties, and the Indian Secular Front.

Mamata said she and the party general secretary, Abhishek Banerjee, have received calls from Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi of the Congress, Uddhav Thackeray of the Shiv Sena (UBT), Arvind Kejriwal of AAP, Tejaswi Yadav of RJD, Akhilesh Yadav of the Samajwadi Party and Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren — all of whom expressed solidarity.

Reacting to her appeal to unite, CPM's Sujan Chakraborty said she enabled the saffron surge in West Bengal through "opportunistic politics".

"The Communists will continue fighting both BJP and TMC in West Bengal," Chakraborty said.

When asked for reaction, Adhikari said he did not want to comment as Mamata is "no longer relevant in the politics of West Bengal".

Social media update

Despite the electoral defeat, Mamata did not resign immediately after the results were announced and continued to question the outcome of the polls.

She updated her profiles on X and Facebook, describing herself as: "Founder Chairperson All India Trinamool Congress. Chief Minister of West Bengal (15th, 16th and 17th Vidhan Sabha)."

Congress workers remove CM campaign banners in Kerala

ARJUN RAGHUNATH
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DHNS

Close on the heels of Congress leaders from Kerala on Saturday urging party workers to stop campaigning for them for the chief minister's post, the party workers started removing banners and posters supporting their leaders of choice.

Congress leaders VD Satheesan, KC Venugopal, and Ramesh Chennithala — contenders for the CM post — urged the party workers to stop the poster-banner campaigns for them.

They made the call after a three-hour-long discussion with Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi in Delhi.

Congress workers then swung into action in many parts of the state, including Indira Bhavan — the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee headquarters — in Thiruvananthapuram.

Strong displeasure

The AICC leadership seems to have expressed strong displeasure over the ongoing campaigns and rallies in Kerala over the CM post.

The poster-banner campaigns and rallies over the last few days have mostly been by loyalists of Satheesan and Venugopal.

A Congress worker even staged a symbolic "Shayana Pradakshinam" by rolling on the floor at Iritty in Kannur, urging that Satheesan be made the CM.

Apart from the open campaigns and social media posts, Congress workers and supporters were also learnt to be sending emails to AICC leaders — including Wayanad MP Priyanka Gandhi — mentioning their choices.

No consensus in Cong on Kerala CM

SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

KC Venugopal, Ramesh Chennithala and VD Satheesan. PTI FILE

The Congress on Saturday did not name its choice for the chief ministerial post in Kerala, as consensus eluded even after a nearly three-hour meeting that top leaders Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi had with the three contenders.

The party made it clear that a "final decision" would be taken in "due course", but sources indicated that it may take a day or two because Kharge and Rahul are consulting Congress Parliamentary Party Chairperson Sonia Gandhi and veteran leaders like AK Antony are reviewing the opinion of allies.

The delay in announcement meant that the contenders — KC Venugopal, VD Satheesan and Ramesh Chennithala — were unwilling to dilute their claims for the top post.

After the meeting at Kharge's 10-Rajaji Road residence here, the three leaders along with party in-charge Deepa Dasmunsi and Congress' Kerala chief Sunny Joseph, asked their supporters not to indulge in any activities that bring a bad name to the party.

"I think in due time, we will get the final decision (on CM) by our high command, and we are waiting for that," Dasmunsi told reporters.

When asked about the timeline, she said, "Due time means we have time till May 23 (when the Assembly will be dissolved)."

On what was delaying the final decision, she said, "That we can't say."

The high command is in a bind, as Venugopal has the support of a majority of MLAs, while there was an outpouring of support for Satheesan from party workers and the public, along with allies like the Muslim League. Chennithala is the senior-most and the most experienced among the contenders.

Rahul is said to have told the contenders at the meeting, "Relax, we will take a decision soon."

Kharge and Rahul also had individual meetings with the three contenders as well as with Dasmunsi, Joseph and observers Ajay Maken and Mukul Wasnik.

The run-up to Saturday's meeting saw intense lobbying by all three leaders. The central leadership was upset about party supporters organising processions and erecting banners for their respective leaders.

WESTERN DIVIDE Nations across Europe fear growing unpredictability in Washington

Trump's feuds with US allies likely to outlast Iran war

REUTERS

With his decision to pull some US troops from Germany, his threats to draw down forces elsewhere in Europe and his downplaying of Iran's recent attacks on an important Gulf partner, United States President Donald Trump's latest moves foreshadow what could be an enduring legacy of the war: the fraying of ties with key allies.

Even as the US and Iran inch towards a potential off-ramp from their 10-week war, Trump's words and actions have revived fears among friends — from Europe to West Asia and the Indo-Pacific — that the US might prove unreliable in a future crisis. In response, some traditional partners are starting to hedge their bets in ways that could bring lasting changes to relations with Washington, while adversaries such as China and Russia are looking to exploit strategic openings.

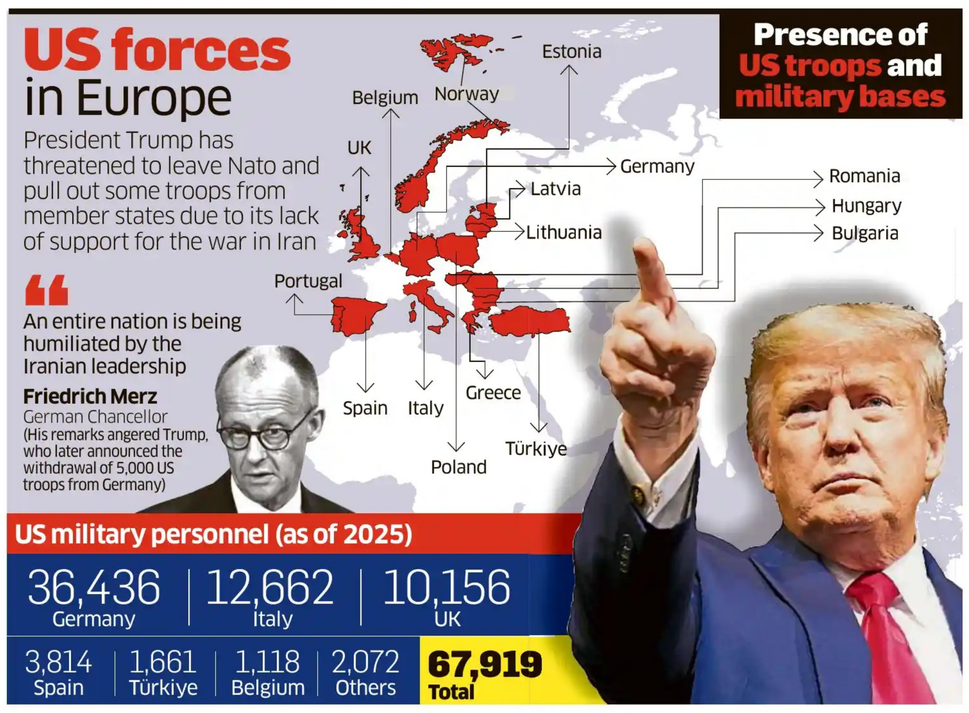
It is not yet clear whether Trump's war with Iran will mark a permanent turning point in US relations with the world. But most analysts believe his erratic conduct since returning to office, effectively upending the rules-based global order, will further erode US alliances, especially with Nato continuing to feel his ire for largely resisting his wartime demands.

"Trump's recklessness with respect to Iran is resulting in some dramatic shifts," said Brett Bruen, a former adviser in the Obama administration who now heads the Situation Room strategic consultancy. "US credibility is at stake."

Tensions are especially high between Trump and the Europeans since he joined Israel in striking Iran on February 28, claiming that Tehran was close to developing a nuclear weapon. Iran's retaliatory closure of the Strait of Hormuz unleashed an unprecedented global energy shock that has made European countries among the biggest economic losers from a war they never asked for.

Even before that, Trump had rattled allies by imposing sweeping tariffs, pushing to take over Greenland from Denmark and cutting military aid to Ukraine.

The rift widened when Trump announced this week that he was withdrawing 5,000 of the 36,400 troops the US has stationed in Germany after Chancellor Friedrich Merz angered him by publicly saying that the Iranians were humiliating the US. The Pentagon then scrapped a planned deployment of Tomahawk cruise missiles to Germany. Trump — who has long questioned whether the US should remain in the Nato alliance it helped create after World War II — said he was also considering reducing US forces in Italy and Spain, whose leaders have been at odds with him over the war.



Feuding with allies

The move followed Trump's accusations that allies had not been doing enough to back the US in the war and his suggestions that this meant Washington might no longer need to honour the alliance's Article 5 mutual defence clause.."President Trump has made his disappointment with Nato and other allies clear," White House spokeswoman Anna Kelly said, noting that some requests to use military bases in Europe for the Iran war had been denied by host governments.

While insisting that Trump had "restored America's standing on the world stage and strengthened relationships abroad", she said he "will never allow the United States to be treated unfairly and taken advantage of by so-called 'allies'".

Trump had earlier taken aim at British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, deriding him in March as "not Winston Churchill" and threatening to impose a "big tariff" on imports from the UK.

And Trump's Pentagon has floated the prospect of punishing Nato allies it believes have failed to support US operations against Iran, including suspending Spain as a member and reviewing US recognition of Britain's claim to the Falkland Islands. European governments have responded by stepping up efforts to increase cooperation among themselves, shoulder more of their own defence burden and jointly develop weapons systems to reduce reliance on the US, while trying to convince Trump of the value of maintaining transatlantic alliances.

One European diplomat called Trump's threats a clear signal for Europe to invest more in its own security, but said leaders were resigned to having to roll with the punches for now.

As "middle powers", the Europeans have limited options, especially given their dependence on their superpower ally for strategic deterrence against any possible attack from Russia.

In their efforts to mollify Trump, meanwhile, European officials have quietly stressed that many of their countries are allowing US forces to use bases on their soil and their airspace during the Iran campaign.

But European leaders, some of whom had used flattery with Trump to defuse earlier crises, are also becoming wiser to his negotiating tactics and more emboldened in standing up to him, analysts say. Jeff Rathke, president of the American-German Institute at Johns Hopkins University, said that while Merz had seemed to charm Trump during earlier meetings, now he "is not trying to hide the critical assessment of what the United States has gotten itself into".

As some European leaders sound the alarm about Nato's future, Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski told a conference in Warsaw there is no need to panic so long as Europe delivers on promised higher military spending, which Trump has long demanded.

WORLD AT A GLANCE

Pakistan Markazi Muslim League activists hold a banner reading "Bunyan-um-Marsoos" as they march during a rally to mark one year since the India-Pakistan conflict, in Lahore on Saturday. AFP

Indian-American faces US denaturalisation case

▸ A 62-year-old Indian-origin man who later became a US citizen is facing denaturalisation proceedings after it emerged that he allegedly conspired to defraud investors of $2.5 million and failed to disclose the information to federal authorities, PTI reports from New York.

Debashis Ghosh is a naturalised US citizen whose last known residence is in Cook County, Illinois. He entered the United States multiple times on various non-immigrant visas beginning as early as 1991 and became a US citizen in 2012. Ghosh is among 12 individuals against whom the US Department of Justice has filed denaturalisation actions in various US district courts. The individuals are accused of serious offences, including providing material support to a terrorist group, committing war crimes and sexually abusing a minor. The US Justice Department said that before Ghosh became a citizen, he conspired to defraud investors of $2.5 million intended for the construction of an aircraft maintenance facility.

WHO to oversee cruise evacuation

▸ The head of the World Health Organisation arrived in Spain on Saturday to oversee the evacuation of more than 140 passengers and crew from a hantavirus-stricken cruise ship headed to the Canary Islands, AP/PTI reports from Tenerife (Spain).

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said he would travel to the Spanish island of Tenerife, off the coast of West Africa, along with senior Spanish government officials "to oversee the safe disembarkation of the passengers, crew members and health experts". The Dutch-flagged ship, MV Hondius, is expected to arrive in Tenerife in the early hours of Sunday. Tedros said that, at this stage, nobody on board the Hondius was showing symptoms of the virus.

Costa Rica's President Laura Fernandez after her swearing-in at the National Stadium in San Jose on Friday. Fernandez will be the latest right-winger to win power in Latin America on a promise to combat drug-related violence. AFP

Top Lankan monk held for sex abuse

▸ One of Sri Lanka's senior-most Buddhist monks has been arrested for the alleged sexual abuse of a minor girl, PTI reports from Colombo.

Venerable Pallegama Hemarathana, 71, is the chief priest of a prominent temple in the country. He was taken into custody on Friday night after a magistrate's court in the holy city of Anuradhapura issued an arrest warrant against him and the victim's mother for allegedly aiding and abetting child abuse. According to police, the victim is a girl who is now 15 years old and was allegedly abused on the premises of a temple in Anuradhapura. Police spokesperson FT Wootler told reporters that a complaint about the incident had been registered in March. The complaint initially related to the abduction and detention of a minor.

Plane hits pedestrian on runway

▸ A Frontier Airlines plane hit a pedestrian on the runway at Denver International Airport during take-off, airport authorities said, sparking an engine fire and forcing passengers to evacuate, AP/PTI reports from Denver.

The plane, en route from Denver to Los Angeles International Airport, "reported striking a pedestrian during take-off at DEN at approximately 11.19 pm on Friday", the airport's official X account said. Neither the airport nor the airline has disclosed the pedestrian's condition. Frontier Airlines said in a statement that Flight 4345 was involved in the collision and that "smoke was reported in the cabin and the pilots aborted take-off".

Putin slams Nato at scaled-back V-Day parade

Russian leader calls Ukraine war goals 'just'

MOSCOW, AFP

Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Saturday that his soldiers in Ukraine were fighting an "aggressive force" backed by the entire Nato alliance and described Russia's war goals as "just", as he addressed a scaled-back Victory Day parade on Red Square.

Putin has made the memory of the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany in World War II a central theme of his 25-year rule. However, a series of Ukrainian long-range attacks in recent weeks prompted the Kremlin to tighten security measures and scale down this year's celebrations. The parade was significantly smaller than in previous years, with no military hardware on display for the first time in nearly two decades.

In an address at the parade, attended by Russian military units as well as soldiers from North Korea, Putin invoked the Soviet victory to rally support for Russia's campaign in Ukraine. "The great feat of the generation of victors inspires the soldiers carrying out the goals of the special military operation today," Putin said.

"They are confronting an aggressive force armed and supported by the entire Nato bloc. And despite this, our heroes move forward," he said.

"I firmly believe that our cause is just," he added later.

Russian President Vladimir Putin attends a ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Moscow on Saturday. AFP

Russia, Ukraine trade accusations of truce violations

Russia and Ukraine on Saturday traded accusations of violating a three-day US-brokered ceasefire announced by President Donald Trump, AFP reports from Kyiv. "The number of attacks by the aggressor has reached 51," the Ukrainian General Staff said. "Despite the declaration of a ceasefire, Ukrainian armed groups launched attacks using drones and artillery against our troops' positions," said the Russian defence ministry.

US proposes to hike minimum wages for H-1B workers

WASHINGTON, PTI

The United States has proposed increasing the minimum wages paid to hire employees under the H-1B visa programme by 30% over the previously fixed limits, a move the administration claims will help prevent foreigners from undercutting the salaries of US nationals.

The new rule, proposed by the US Department of Labour on March 27, seeks to increase the minimum wages across four categories, from entry-level to the most experienced, arguing that the existing wage levels were fixed 20 years ago and no longer adequately protect US workers.

According to the proposed rule, 'Improving Wage Protections for the Temporary and Permanent Employment of Certain Foreign Nationals in the United States', the prevailing wage for entry-level foreign workers was $73,279 per annum, $98,987 for Level II, $121,979 for Level III and $144,202 for Level IV.

The new rule, which is open for public comments until May 26, seeks to increase the prevailing wage for entry-level workers to $97,746, a rise of 33.39% over the previous rate.

The proposed wages for the other categories are $123,212 for Level II, up 24.47%; $147,333 for Level III, up 20.79%; and $175,464 for Level IV, up 21.68%. Prevailing wages differ from city to city.

According to the Department of Labour, the current methodology allows employers to hire foreigners at wage levels significantly below those paid to similarly employed US workers.

The proposed changes would sharply increase the prevailing wage levels used in the H-1B, H-1B1, E-3 and PERM labour certification programmes.

The proposed rules have drawn mixed responses, ranging from strong support to opposition, with critics arguing that smaller companies may no longer be able to hire new entrants for entry-level jobs because of the higher prevailing wages.

The window for public comments closes on May 26, after which the Department of Labour will review the responses and notify the final rule.

Iran could withstand Hormuz blockade for four months: CIA

WASHINGTON/CAIRO, REUTERS: Efforts to end the war between the US and Iran appeared to stall as the two sides traded fire in the Gulf on Friday, while a US intelligence analysis concluded that Tehran could withstand a naval blockade for months.

A CIA assessment indicated that Iran would not face severe economic pressure from a US blockade of Iranian ports for another four months, according to a US official familiar with the matter.

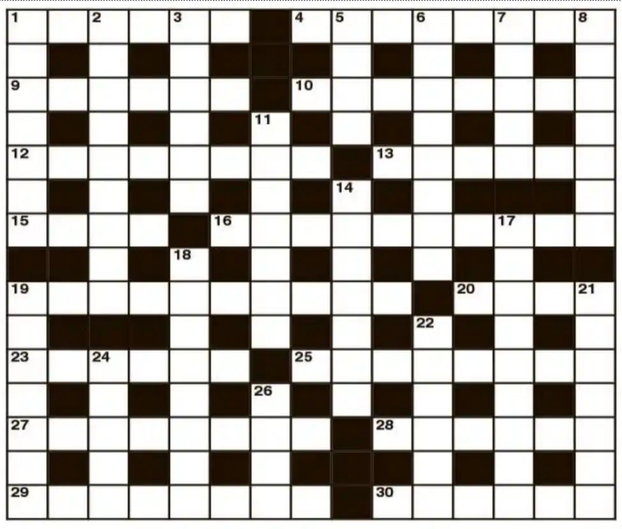
The finding suggests that US leverage over Tehran remains limited as both sides seek to end a conflict that has proved unpopular with US voters.

The Washington Post first reported the assessment.

Recent days have seen some of the biggest flare-ups in fighting in and around the Strait of Hormuz since a ceasefire began a month ago, with the United Arab Emirates coming under renewed attack on Friday.

Washington is awaiting Tehran's response to a US proposal that would formally end the war before talks begin on more contentious issues, including Iran's nuclear programme.

◆ SUNDAY CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 2679 ◆



ACROSS
1 US Pacific state (6)
4 Fleet of small ships (8)
9 A craving (6)
10 Wide view (8)
12 Abroad (8)
13 On fire (6)
15 To lean (4)
16 Outstripped (4,6)
19 Precedence on the road (5,2,3)
20 Pack away tidily (4)
23 Gloomy (6)
25 So to speak (2,2,4)
27 Experienced veteran (3,5)
28 Attack strongly (3,3)
29 Entrust to a deputy (8)
30 Interrupt and harass speaker (6)

DOWN
1 In eager haste (7)
2 Symbol of surrender (5,4)
3 Take no refusal (6)
5 A heavy soft metal (4)
6 Anxious (8)
7 South American transport animal (5)
8 Completed (2,2,3)
11 Commission from shady deal (4-3)
14 'The waltz king' (7)
17 On trial (2,3,4)
18 Of solid worth (8)
19 To answer (7)
21 Grapple (7)
22 Conflict (6)
24 Exemplary person (5)
26 Notable achievement (4)

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD 4039

CRYPTIC
ACROSS: 9, Meant-I-me 10, Two (too) 11, Attire 12, S-pre-ad 13, Inten-d-s 14, Aunt 15, Bear with me 17, Off and on 18, Arrange 19, Sag-a 21, Incite (in sight) 24, The sleep of the just 27, S'I-esta 29, Iota 30, Collide 33, Falsetto 35, Monkey suit 36, Stag (rev.) 37, Fr-agile 38, Thri-c-e 40, Port-al(ley) 41, On-E 42, Some-time.
DOWN: 1, Deep regret 2, On-c-e 3, Fiddling 4, De-light 5, Down to earth 6, Bags of time 7, Strain 8, B-Ring o-ut 10, (bat) T-it-le 16, Re-aders 20, A-bout 22, Coup-L-es 23, Devil of a job 25, Least of all 26, Tidy income 28, In-action 31, Over-time 32, Incense 34, Sights 35, M-ain-e 39, Rita.

EASY
ACROSS: 9, Divorced 10, Bun 11, Bovine 12, Adhere 13, Inspect 14, Cure 15, Department 17, Ignition 18, Tropics 19, Tsar 21, Nudist 24, Worth two in the bush 27, Magnum 29, With 30, Lantern 33, Footwear 35, Silk screen 36, Pier 37, Handles 38, Napped 40, Hernia 41, Spy 42, Energise.
DOWN: 1, Middle-brow 2, Pope 3, Eclectic 4, Admirer 5, Inferiority 6, Abstinence 7, Avocet 8, Enormous 10, Beset 16, Aspirin 20, Saint 22, Doubter 23, Awkwardness 25, Hammerhead 26, Hartebeest 28, Agonised 31, Absentee 32, Bluster 34, Tyrant35, Silly 39, Page.

SU DO KU X - 3911

6								
5								
		1						9
			9	5				
2				8	6	9		
								2
8	1	9	3			7		
		5	4					
7					1			

SOLUTION TO 3910

7	3	8	6	1	2	4	9	5
9	1	5	7	4	8	2	3	6
4	2	6	5	9	3	1	8	7
1	5	7	3	2	6	9	4	8
6	4	9	1	8	7	3	5	2
3	8	2	9	5	4	7	6	1
8	9	4	2	6	1	5	7	3
5	7	1	8	3	9	6	2	4
2	6	3	4	7	5	8	1	9

To solve the puzzle: The objective is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column, each 3x3 box and each shaded diagonal line contains the same number only once.

GROWING IMBALANCE Impact Player and flat pitches have reduced bowlers, especially spinners, to mere spectators

IPL's big batting OBSESSION

MADHU JAWALI
BENGALURU, DHNS

By its very nature, limited-overs cricket, unlike multi-day red-ball cricket, is essentially a batters-versus-batters contest. Whichever team scores more runs ends up winning the match, irrespective of how many wickets it loses. This dynamic naturally tilts the balance in favour of batters. But never has the imbalance been as pronounced as in this edition of the Indian Premier League, where 200-plus totals have become the norm and chasing them down hardly comes as a surprise.

Flatter pitches, deeper batting line-ups because of the Impact Player rule, and the resulting high-risk, high-reward approach have reduced bowlers to little more than bowling machines waiting to be lined up and launched over the ropes. There have been a handful of matches where pitches have been slow, low, or occasionally spicy, and batters have struggled in such conditions. By and large, however, it has been an uneven contest between bat and ball, with batters enjoying the upper hand in a set-up where favourable rules and equally pliable conditions work to their advantage.

A look at the numbers so far this season (until the RCB-LSG game on Thursday) reveals how bowlers have been reduced to mere participants. Last season, there were 51 totals of 200 or more across the entire tournament. After the 50th game of this edition, the number already stands at 42, with more than 20 matches still to go.

More telling, however, has been the ease with which teams have chased down 200-plus targets that were once considered insurmountable. There have already been 12 successful 200-plus chases this season, compared to just eight in the entirety of last season.

One of the primary reasons is the Impact Player rule, which teams have become increasingly adept at exploiting since its introduction four seasons ago. In the past, scouts looked for quality all-rounders or "mystery" spinners. Today, considerable time, money, and strategy are devoted to finding a player capable of making a decisive impact. Of course, teams have to be dynamic in applying the rule depending on whether they bat or bowl first, but some players are picked specifically for this role.

While the rule does provide teams with the option of an extra bowler, on absolute belters an additional batter effectively neutralises any bowling advantage. If totals upwards of 260 are not safe, then the contest can hardly be considered fair. The presence of an extra batter in a 20-over match is akin to giving teams a handicap. Awareness of that cushion, combined with a shift in batting philosophy, where preserving one's wicket is increasingly viewed as outdated, encourages batters to attack from the outset. Even if a batter succeeds only 40 to 50 per cent of the time across a tournament, the approach is still deemed worthwhile.

"Yeah, 100%," said Devdutt Padikkal after his 27-ball 55 against Gujarat Titans when asked whether the batting firepower below him helped him stay aggressive. "We have seen what Tim (David), Romario (Shepherd) and Jitesh (Sharma) are capable of down the order and when you have that kind of firepower waiting in the wings, you have the freedom to just go out there and express yourself."

Given the nature of the surfaces and increasingly defensive bowling, what chance do bowlers really have of succeeding?

Muttiah Muralitharan's observation that even he and Shane Warne would not have been especially effective in these conditions puts the issue into perspective.

"See, we would have turned the ball, but we would not have made a big dent," he said while discussing the plight of spinners, particularly in this edition of the tournament. "We might have got one or two wickets maybe. They would still have scored 40 runs off us easily because the wickets are so good," he said.

"Shane Warne was also a freak because he could spin the ball and do wonders. But the game has changed. We can't compare eras. The way players bat, the mentality of players, these are the things that have changed."

This season has also seen a diminished role for spinners, largely because pitches across most venues have offered them very little assistance in controlling batters. As a result, captains and team managements have increasingly preferred pacers.

While spinners bowled 1,050 overs, accounting for 38.3 per cent of the total overs bowled last season, that figure has dropped to 32.1 per cent this season (595.4 overs so far). Consequently, their share of wickets has also declined, with spinners accounting for 30.9 per cent of total wickets this season compared to 36.4 per cent last year. Their economy rate has risen to 9.20 runs per over from 8.86 in the previous edition.

Muralitharan believes producing fairer pitches is the only way to restore balance between bat and ball, though he admits it is probably wishful thinking.

"If we can give fair wickets... but then the spectators will be bored," he noted. "Cricket followers, especially younger T20 fans, are very entertainment-oriented. They want to see fours and sixes. That is why the tournament is built this way, with that extra player coming in to bat and preventing teams from posting lower scores," he said.

"It's entertainment. This is not really about developing cricketers anymore. It is a big business at the moment, right? Sponsors and everything."

The IPL's batting boom may reflect a certain marketing demand but it risks becoming too monotonous. Even though white-ball cricket is designed to favour batters, pushing bowlers to the margins deprives the game of its compelling skill. No doubt, sixes and fours have their own charm but cricket derives its appeal from the battle between bat and ball, not from one part of the game reducing the other to complete irrelevance.

No target seems unachievable with batters going about their job fearlessly, aided in no small measure by flat tracks and cushion of an extra batter. PTI

200 in last 2 IPL seasons

	Total scores > 200	1st Innings > 200	Successful chases > 201
2025	51	32	8
2026	42	24	12

Pace vs Spin in last 2 IPL seasons

Year	Bowling	Figures	% Overs	% Wkts	Econ
2025	Pace	**1691.0 Ov / 527 Wkts**	61.7%	63.6%	9.90
2026	Pace	**1259.5 Ov / 388 Wkts**	67.9%	69.1%	9.94
2025	Spin	**1050.0 Ov / 302 Wkts**	38.3%	36.4%	8.86
2026	Spin	**595.4 Ov / 174 Wkts**	32.1%	30.9%	9.20

Matches until RCB vs LSG on May 7 — Compiled by Arun Gopalakrishnan

Attaollahi-trained Kalamitsi wins Kunigal Stud Trophy

BENGALURU RESULTS

S S Attaollahi-trained Kalamitsi, ridden by jockey P Trevor, won the Kunigal Stud Trophy, the manin of the event of the races here on Saturday.

1. The Chantille Plate 1500M: Pledge (Mukul A Sonawala, Girish Mehta) Akshay Kumar 1, Assurances (Suraj Narredu) 2, Alamgir (Pavan) 3, Star Of India (Neeraj Rawal) 4. WB: 3 3/4, 1 1/2, 1 1/4. T: 1-33.32. Tote: Rs 25, 20, 14, 11 (P) . Fc: Rs 134. Q: Rs 60. Shp: Rs 37. Thp: Rs 37. Tri: Rs 288 & 62. Exp: Rs 519 & 210. TB: D Byramji. Fav: Alamgir.

2. The Rabindranath Tagore Jayanti Plate 1300M: Rodney (Rapar's Galloping, Rajendran and Francis Arun Kumar) Pavan 1, Circle Of Dreams (Akshay Kumar) 2, Waitara (Neeraj Rawal) 3, Thessalian (Antony Raj) 4. WB: 1, 5, Hd. T: 1-19.01. Tote: Rs 56, 15, 10, 19 (P) . Fc: Rs 98. Q: Rs 30. Shp: Rs 55. Thp: Rs 38. Tri: Rs 431 & 256. Exp: Rs 2417 & 1456. TB: I Ghatala. Fav: Circle Of Dreams.

3. The Dupont Plate 1200M: Jalwa (Mahima Shailesh, Dr Dayananda Pai, Naveen G Preben Gowda and K Patel) Asirvatham 1, Annabelle (Aleemuddin) 2, Razzmatazz (S Sachin) 3, White Secret (A Ramu) 4. WB: 1 3/4, 1, 1, T: 1-15.48. Tote: Rs 219, 37, 12, 13 (P). Fc: Rs 896. Q: Rs 287. Shp: Rs 32. Thp: Rs 39. Tri: Rs 2685 & 732. Exp: Rs 16847 & 21660. TB: Azhar Ali; Fav: Annabelle.

4. The Kunigal Stud Trophy 1200M: Kalamitsi (Solomon Benveniste, Sarainaga Racing, Hemang Doctor and Lokesh Ahuja) P Trevor 1, Ricardo (Aleemuddin) 2, Excellent Lass (Yash Narredu) 3, Never Give In (Antony Raj) 4. WB: 1/2, 2, 3/4. T: 1-12.71. Tote: Rs 47, 18, 25 (P). Fc: Rs 340. Q: Rs 129. Shp: Rs 35. Thp: Rs 52. Tri: Rs 229 & 78. Exp: Rs 515 & 416. TB: S S Attaollahi; Fav: Excellent Lass.

5. The Dean Stephens Memorial Trophy 1400M: Siege Storm (Daulat Chhabria, S R Sanas, DT Racing and Ashok Ranpise) Akshay Kumar 1, Ashwa New York (Yash Narredu) 3, The Archer (P Trevor) 3, Atman (Vivek G) 4. WB: 4 1/2, 3/4, Nk. T: 1-25.85. Tote: Rs 20, 11, 18, 13:(P). Fc: Rs 193. Q: Rs 138. Shp: Rs 55. Thp: Rs 47. Tri: Rs 321 & 79. Exp: Rs 1389 & 829. TB: P Prasanna Kumar; Fav Siege Storm.

6. The Azhar Plate 1200M: Final Call (P J Vazifdar, K H Vachha, Mukul A Sonawala M Rishad, D R Sanas) P Trevor 1, Flash (Md Ashraf Reza) 2, Roadrunner (Laxman Singh) 3, Ebotse (Aleemuddin) 4. WB: Shd, 1/2, 2 1/4. T: 1-14.38; Tote: Rs 13, 12, 26, 18 (P). Fc: Rs 186. Q: Rs 126. Shp: Rs 99. Thp: Rs 46. Tri: Rs 736 & 228. Exp: Rs 3786 & 1614. TB: J E Mckown; Fav Final Call. **Jackpot**: Rs 18,304 & 7409. **Minij-jackpot**: Rs 6,094. **I treble**: Rs 4,927. **II treble**: Rs 363.

Sunshine for Mother's Day Trophy

BENGALURU SELECTIONS

Irfan Ghatala-trained Sunshine, to be ridden by Suraj Narredu, will be fancied most in the the Mother's Day Trophy, the feature event to be run over a distance of 1500 meters in the races on Sunday. The first race starts at 3 pm.

1. The Royal Challenge Plate - 1500M: Agape 1, Palma 2, Double Scotch 3.
2. The Razeen Plate (Div II) - 1400M: Agrador 1, Refined Aggression 2, My Solitaire 3.
3. The Agumbe Plate 1200M: Silicon Star 1, Senor Cherie 2, Basilica 3.
4. The Mother's Day Trophy - 1500M: Sunshine 1, Maana 2, Storm Shadow 3.
5. The Capricorn Stud Plate - 1300M: Jersey King 1, Promiseofthefuture 2, Lux Aeterna 3.
6. the Razeen Plate (Div I) - 1400M: Valiant Stream 1, El Rey 2, Prince Of Wales 3.
Day's Best: Agrador. **Jackpot:** 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. **Mini Jackpot:** 3, 4, 5, 6. **I treble:** 1, 2, 3. **II treble:** 4, 5, 6.

Gukesh scores comeback win

WARSAW (POLAND), PTI

World Champion D Gukesh (**in pic**) endured a shaky start to the blitz section but recovered ground with a commanding victory over Poland's Jan-Krzysztof Duda in the ninth round of the Super Rapid and Blitz here.

After finishing the rapid section with nine points out of a possible 18, Gukesh collected four more points from the opening nine blitz rounds to take his tally to 13 out of 27 at the halfway stage of the blitz competition.

.Hans Moke Niemann of the United States continued to lead the tables despite a very mediocre show on the first day of blitz.

Results (round 18): D Gukesh (Ind, 13) bt Duda Jan-Krzysztof (Pol, 12.5); Fabiano Caruana (USA, 15) drew with Vladimir Fedoseev (Slo, 15); Hans Moke Niemann (USA, 16.5) lt to Radoslav Wojtaszek (Pol, 10); Wesley So (USA, 16) drew with Javokhir Sindarov (Uzb, 12); Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (Fra, 12.5) drew with Firouzja Alireza (Fra, 12.5).

FOOTBALL INDIAN SUPER LEAGUE

Williams' screamer downs Jamshedpur

Chhetri becomes most-capped player in ISL history; Munoz tastes first victory

JAMSHEDPUR, PTI

Bengaluru FC's Ryan Williams (centre) scores the winning goal against JFC at the JRD Tata Complex on Saturday. BFC

Former India captain and Bengaluru FC striker Sunil Chhetri became the most capped player in Indian Super League history as his side beat Jamshedpur FC 1-0 in a hard-fought match here on Saturday.

The first-half strike from Ryan Williams (38th minute) proved decisive in the contest where Jamshedpur dominated large spells, but failed to find a breakthrough.

The 41-year-old Chhetri, who was not named in the starting XI, was brought on from the bench in the 85th minute in place of Namgyal Bhutia, making him the most-capped player in ISL history with 195 appearances. The legendary striker has retired from international football in 2025.

The result saw Bengaluru FC climb to fourth in the ISL table with 20 points from 12 matches, while Jamshedpur FC remain third on 21 points, level with East Bengal FC and Mohun Bagan Super Giant, who are the top two in the standings.

Bengaluru began brightly, winning a string of early corners and testing the Jamshedpur defence, where Sarthak Golui and Pratik Chaudhari stood firm under pressure.

The visitors continued to probe, with Braian Sánchez and Sirojiddin Kuziev both attempting efforts from distance, though neither troubled Albino Gomes.

Jamshedpur gradually grew into the contest, with Madih Talal at the heart of their attacking play. The midfielder combined effectively with Nikola Stankovi and Sanan Mohammed, creating the Red Miners' first real opportunity in the 15th minute when Raphael Messi Bouli's long-range effort forced Gurpreet Singh Sandhu into action.

The game opened up into an end-to-end contest, with both sides showing intent in the final third but lacking precision. Jamshedpur thought they had taken the lead midway through the half when Pratik Chaudhari guided the ball home from a set-piece, only for the effort to be ruled out for an offside.

Bengaluru, however, made their dominance count in the 38th minute.

Result: Bengaluru FC: 1 (Ryan Williams 38th) bt Jamshedpur FC: 0

Indian campaign comes to an end

BENGALURU, DHNS

Top seed Justina Mikulskyte and second seed Zuzanna Pawlikowska set up the summit clash after ending India's challenge at the Tumakuru Open ITF W35 at the Tumakuru District Tennis Courts on Saturday.

Lithuania's Justina ended Vaidehee Chaudhari's impressive run with a hard-fought 6-3, 2-6, 6-2 victory in the first semifinal.

The top seed struck the decisive break in the sixth game of the opening set before Vaidehee roared back strongly in the second, breaking in the fourth, sixth and eighth games to level the match convincingly.

However, Justina regained control in the deciding set with early breaks in the first and fifth games, using her experience and consistency to close out the contest and book her place in the final. Both players struck two aces each, while Vaidehee committed five double faults against Justina's three.

The second semifinal was heartbreaking for India's Zeel Desai, who was forced to retire despite leading against Poland's Zuzanna Pawlikowska. Zeel had edged a gripping opening set in a tense tiebreak 11-9 and was leading 2-1 in the second set when severe cramps brought her run to a painful end.

Results (Women's singles semi-finals, prefix denotes seeding): 1-Justina Mikulskyte (Ltu) bt 3-Vaidehee Chaudhari (Ind) 6-3, 2-6, 6-2; 2-Zuzanna Pawlikowska (Pol) bt 4-Zeel Desai (Ind) 6-7(9), 1-2 (retired).

Doubles (Final): Ksenia Laskutova/ Elina Nepliy bt 1-Vaidehee Chaudhari (Ind)/ Zuzanna Pawlikowska (Pol) walkover.

Top seed Justina Mikulskyte of Lithuania essays a backhand during her semifinal win over India's Vaidehee Chaudhari on Saturday.

Kickstart on a winning spree

BENGALURU, DHNS: Kickstart FC continued their recovery in the second phase of the Indian Women's League with a 1-0 victory over former champions Gokulam Kerala in Kolkata on Saturday.

Nepalese midfielder Saru Limbu scored the solitary goal in the 16th minute to seal the win as Kickstart improved a spot to fourth place (16 points in 11 matches). This was the third win on the go for the Benglauru side.

Result: Kickstart: 1 (Saru Limbu 16th) bt Gokulam: 0.

SCB's hopes end

A first-half hat-trick by the league's top-scorer Himanshu Jangra (12th minute, 21st, 44th) saw Delhi FC hand a 5-1 drubbing to SC Bengaluru in Mohali on Saturday.

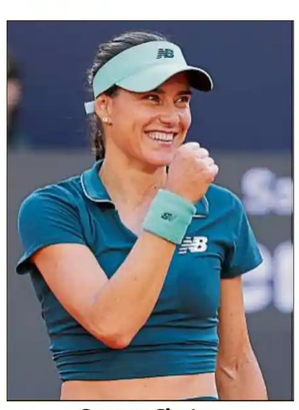
Devadath S (62nd) scored the consolation goal after the hour mark but Wungshung Lungleng (81st) and Akash Tirkey (90+5th) only piled on SCB's misery.

The result also ended sixth-placed SCB's (8 points in 7 matches) chances of promotion to the Indian Football League as the Bengaluru side fell too far behind while Delhi FC retook the lead with 16 points with just a round left in the season.

Meanwhile, FC Bengaluru United (14 points) dropped to second place in their group, which is also the last promotion spot. FCBU's title chances, however, remain open as they will face bottom-placed GMSC in their last match, while Delhi FC will take on third-placed United Kolkata (14 points) in a three-way battle to the top. Both the matches are on May 14.

Result: DFC: 5 (Himanshu Jangra 12th minute, 21st, 44th, Wungshung Lungleng 81st, Akash Tirkey 90+5th) bt SCB: 1 (Devadath S 62nd).

Saru Limbu. KICKSTART FC



Sorona Cirstea

Fancied Sabalenka suffers early exit at Italian Open

ROME, AFP

Aryna Sabalenka became the second star name dumped out of the Italian Open when she suffered a shock third-round exit on Saturday, as Jannik Sinner bids to continue his record-breaking Masters 1000 winning streak.

World number one and pre-tournament favourite for overall victory, Sabalenka followed men's tennis icon Novak Djokovic in going out early from the Rome event following a 2-6, 6-3, 7-5 loss to Sorana Cirstea.

Earlier on Friday, Djokovic slumped to an early elimination, crumbling to a second-round defeat at the hands of qualifier Dino Prizmic which leaves question marks about his physical condition ahead of Roland Garros. Djokovic was sent packing by big-hitting Croatian Prizmic, who claimed the biggest scalp of his young career with a stunning 2-6, 6-2, 6-4 win on centre court in Rome.

French Open champion Coco Gauff is still in the hunt after taking over two hours to beat Argentina's Solana Sierra 5-7, 6-0, 6-4.

Jasmine Paolini's defence of her Italian Open title came to an early end after the home favourite was knocked out by Elise Mertens. Local favourite Paolini lost 4-6, 7-6 (7/5), 6-3 to Mertens following an error-strewn performance.

The 30-year-old is set to drop out of the top 10 of the women's world rankings.

Sinner will take to an expectant centre court later on Saturday as a hot favourite to extend his run of five consecutive Masters 1000 tournament victories.

> When I wasn't playing, I got one extra month for preparation. I think the attitude that I kept working as hard as possible every day helped me get into the playing XI.
>
> **SURYANSH SHEDGE, PBKS ALL-ROUNDER**

Rashid spins a web around RR

Leggie finishes the job for Titans after Shubman, Sudharsan fifties

JAIPUR, PTI

Shubman Gill overcame an early twitch in his left foot to produce a sublime 44-ball 84 along with Sai Sudharsan's fluent 55 as Gujarat Titans Search posted a challenging 229 for four against Rajasthan Royals in their IPL match here on Saturday.

Gill's knock, studded with nine fours and three sixes, was a masterclass in timing and strokeplay as he mixed elegance with aggression despite struggling briefly with discomfort in his left foot before reaching his fourth IPL fifty this season.

The Gujarat Titans skipper shared a commanding 118-run opening stand with Sudharsan, who continued his prolific season with a stroke-filled 30-ball fifty as the duo tore into the Rajasthan attack after the hosts opted to bowl on a flat deck.

Skipper Shubman Gill (left) scored a 44-ball 84 to take GT's total to 229/4 before Rashid Khan's 4/33 broke the back of Rajasthan Royals' batting at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium on Saturday. REUTERS/AFP

Brijesh Sharma (2/47) picked the wickets of Gill and Jason Holder in the back end but Washington Sundar (37 not out; 20 balls, 2x4s, 3x6s) played the finisher's role along with Rahul Tewatia (14 not out; 4 balls), who smashed two sixes in a 21-run final over to take GT to their season's highest total.

Their misery extended with Jofra Archer enduring a difficult outing early on, leaking 18 runs in the opening over, including five extras, as Sudharsan capitalised on his erratic lines and leaked 46 runs from his three overs.

Left-hander Sudharsan repeatedly pierced the off-side field while Gill settled in before shifting gears with a range of authoritative strokes.

GT raced to 108 without loss in just nine overs before Rajasthan managed to slow things down through spin in the middle phase.

Yash Raj Punia (1/37) finally provided the breakthrough in the 11th over by dismissing Sudharsan and ending the towering opening partnership.

Gill, however, continued unfazed despite requiring treatment from the physio in the ninth over after appearing to hurt his left foot. He soon brought up his fifty and kept attacking the spinners.

Jos Buttler then added to Rajasthan's problems with a brisk 13 off 10 balls before falling while trying to maintain the momentum.

Gill survived two chances during his sparkling innings. On 54, Shimron Hetmyer spilled a catch at deep midwicket off Ravindra Jadeja, with the ball deflecting over the ropes for six in a 17-run over. Hetmyer then put down another difficult running chance when Gill was on 61.

The GT captain made the Royals pay immediately, dancing down the track against Punia, bringing out a reverse scoop and repeatedly piercing the infield with precision.

Earlier, Archer had also been taken apart in his second spell when Gill slashed him through covers, lofted him over mid-off and then drove straight back past the bowler with authority.

SCOREBOARD

GUJARAT TITANS: Sai Sudharsan c Archer b Punja 55, Shubman Gill c Deshpande b Brijesh 84, Jos Buttler c Ferreira b Jadeja 13, Washington Sundar (not out) 37, Jason Holder c Jaiswal b Brijesh 7, Rahul Tewatia (not out) 14. Extras (B-1, LB-1, NB-1, W-16) 19. **TOTAL (for 4 wkts, 20 overs) 229.**

Fall of wickets: 1-118, 2-150, 3-185, 4-205.

Bowling: Jofra Archer 3-0-46-0, Tushar Deshpande 4-0-52-0, Brijesh Sharma 4-0-47-2, Yash Raj Punja 4-0-37-1, Ravindra Jadeja 4-0-34-1, Donovan Ferreira 1-0-11-0.

RAJASTHAN ROYALS: Yashasvi Jaiswal c Sindhu b Rabada 3, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi c Arshad b Siraj 36, Dhruv Jurel b Rashid 24, Shimron Hetmyer c Holder b Rabada 6, Ravindra Jadeja lbw b Rashid 38, Donovan Ferreira b Rashid 4, Shubham Dubey b Rashid 15, Dasun Shanaka c Gill b Holder 16, Jofra Archer c Buttler b Holder 5, Tushar Deshpande c Sundar b Holder 1, Brijesh Sharma (not out) 1. Extras (LB-1, W-2) 3. **TOTAL (all out, 16.3 overs) 152.**

Fall of wickets: 1-38, 2-40, 3-68, 4-87, 5-91, 6-115, 7-136, 8-141, 9-151.

Bowling: Mohammed Siraj 4-0-55-1, Kagiso Rabada 3-0-33-2, Sai Kishore 1-0-8-0, Rashid Khan 4-0-33-4, Washington Sundar 2-0-10-0, Jason Holder 2.3-0-12-3.

Result: GT won by 77 runs

PoM: Rashid Khan

RCB eye a turnaround

Bengaluru batters look to recharge against MI

LIVE 7:30 PM

VIGNESH BHARADWAJ
RAIPUR, DHNS

An IPL season that was closing its doors on playoffs spots now appears far more open, with six teams within touching distance. However, the signs of the bottom four playing party-poopers at some point were there all along.

Measures to battle an unknown surface and the aim for the batting group to click in unison will feature on top of Royal Challengers Bengaluru's agenda as the defending champions hope to rediscover their bite against a struggling Mumbai Indians at the Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh International Stadium here on Sunday.

RCB have lost three of their last five matches and have slipped into a mid-tournament slump. This fixture will also mark the start of a crucial stretch as they play three games in eight days, and the musical chair for the top two spots is expected to get exciting.

On recent evidence, the Challengers will need to get their batting act together. They were bowled out for 155 in Ahmedabad and faltered while chasing down 213 (DLS method) on a "very good wicket to bat" in Lucknow, as skipper Rajat Patidar had suggested.

While Virat Kohli, Devdutt Padikkal and Patidar have been putting in the hard yards, the concern lies at the top with Jacob Bethell, who has failed to inject the firepower his injured English team-mate Phil Salt provided.

Bethell, in the four outings so far, has managed just 43 runs, including two single-digit scores and that has pressurised Kohli to play a more aggressive role.

Jitesh Sharma's batting has also become a concern as the wicketkeeper has managed just 64 runs, averaging only eight.

However, it looks like the 22-year-old could be handed another opportunity while Salt remains unavailable.

The game couldn't possibly have been more well-timed for the Challengers, as they have a chance to hold the Mumbai Indians by the scruff of their neck when they are at their lowest.

RCB, however, will be aware of the consequences of taking their foot off the pedal against their rivals.

Coming into the competition with a star-studded side, Mumbai were considered favourites to qualify for the playoffs, but Hardik Pandya's men have bungled in crucial games, bringing them to the verge of exit.

While Mumbai are still in contention, they are also expected to play free-flowing, no-pressure cricket, which spells trouble for RCB.

Rohit Sharma will have to deal with the usual expectations, in addition to those brought on by his stellar 84 in the last game. However, Jasprit Bumrah has managed to pick just three wickets in 10 games, which has not helped Mumbai's cause.

Hardik has travelled with the side but his availability remains a question until the toss while Suryakumar Yadav is expected to join the team on the morning of the game.

In all, RCB will look to hammer the final nail in Mumbai's coffin while MI will look to gatecrash RCB's home away from home party.

POINTS TABLE

Team	Played	Won	Lost	NR	Pts	NRR
Sunrisers Hyderabad	11	7	4	0	14	0.737
Gujarat Titans	11	7	3	0	14	0.228
Punjab Kings	10	6	3	1	13	0.571
Royal Challengers	10	6	4	0	12	1.234
Rajasthan Royals	10	6	4	0	12	0.082
Chennai Super Kings	10	5	5	0	10	0.151
Kolkata Knight Riders	10	4	5	1	9	-0.169
Delhi Capitals	11	4	7	1	8	-1.154
Mumbai Indians	10	3	7	0	6	-0.649
Lucknow Super Giants	10	3	7	0	6	-0.934

Royal Challengers Bengaluru will expect another meaty knock from skipper Rajat Patidar as they face Mumbai Indians in Raipur on Sunday. AFP

CSK aim to move up as they host LSG

CHENNAI, PTI

The sixth-placed Chennai Super Kings will look to keep their playoff hopes alive when they face a beleaguered Lucknow Super Giants, currently languishing at the bottom of the points table, in an Indian Premier League match here on Sunday.

With the league stage entering a decisive phase, CSK still remain in contention for a top-four finish despite an inconsistent campaign marked by batting collapses and patchy performances both at home and away.

Returning to Chepauk could offer the five-time champions an opportunity to regain momentum against LSG who have endured a forgettable season and are already staring at an exit.

Noor Ahmad (centre), along with fellow spinner Akeal Hosein, has done well to control the middle overs for CSK. PTI

CSK's campaign has largely revolved around Sanju Samson, whose starts at the top have often dictated the team's fortunes.

LIVE 3:30 PM

While new recruit Samson has emerged as the team's batting anchor and "backbone", skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad has struggled for consistency with the bat this season.

After a poor start, Ruturaj has regained form in the beginning of this month with crucial unbeaten knocks of 74 and 67, his resurgence helping steer CSK towards the top five, even though he failed in their last outing against Delhi Capitals with Samson remaining unbeaten on a match-winning 52-ball 87.

The hosts would also expect bigger contributions from the middle-order featuring Dewald Brevis, Kartik Sharma and Shivam Dube, hoping to accelerate in the death overs.

MS Dhoni is yet to play any match due to a persistent calf injury sustained before the season. While he has trained in the nets, he has not featured in the playing XI so far.

The conditions at Chepauk have shifted from their traditional slow, spin-friendly nature to more balanced and batting-friendly, but they still retain some assistance for spinners, hence the duo of Akeal Hosein and Noor Ahmad could be the key for CSK in the middle overs.

LSG are enduring a disastrous season, sitting at the bottom of the table (10th place) with only three wins from 10 matches.

Burning desire to put in a match-winning show: Bethell

VIGNESH BHARADWAJ
RAIPUR, DHNS

While Royal Challengers Bengaluru are still in prime position to enter the playoffs with 12 points from 10 games, English opener Jacob Bethell, who replaced the injured Phil Salt to accompany Virat Kohli, finds himself under the pump.

It has been a tough run of games for the Challengers' "Starboy", having scored only 43 runs in four matches.

Bethell was not obviously pleased with his form but the 22-year-old remained unfazed, saying that the desire to end his rut was burning bright.

"I never really feel like I'm fighting for a spot. At the end of the day, I haven't scored the runs I've wanted to and that's not helped the team. My aim as a batter is to go out there and score runs and get us off to a good start and I haven't done that," Bethell said ahead of the game against Mumbai Indians.

Jacob Bethell

"It's not from a place of looking behind my back and fighting for a spot, it's more from a hunger to actually contribute to this team. It doesn't feel good when you're not contributing at all to wins. Especially now that we've lost the last couple of games, there's a burning desire in there to go out there and put in a match-winning performance tomorrow."

Having just spent 31 balls in the middle of this season, Bethell admitted that getting into batting rhythm was "tricky" but is happy to take one game at a time.

"It definitely is tricky to find your rhythm when you're not spending as much time in the middle as you would like. I can't lie, I've not got off to the start that I would have wanted. But at the end of the day, the only game that matters is the one tomorrow and then the next."

Bethell, who batted alongside Kohli on Saturday before the rain ended both Bengaluru and Mumbai's practice abruptly, said that having someone like Kohli does not add pressure but takes it away.

"I don't think it adds any pressure. I've said multiple times how cool it is to play with him and be involved in the dressing room. It is very nice to have someone of his calibre in your team. You can count on him, so a lot of pressure is off."

Liverpool miss out on CL berth after Chelsea draw

LONDON, AFP: Liverpool missed the chance to all but secure Champions League action next season after a 1-1 draw against Chelsea, while Manchester United were frustrated in a goalless stalemate at Sunderland on Saturday.

Ryan Gravenberch's sweet strike gave Liverpool the perfect start in the sixth minute at Anfield.

Chelsea hit back when Enzo Fernandez's 35th-minute free-kick evaded everyone to find the bottom corner.

Boos at full-time reflected the mood around Anfield after another lacklustre performance from the defending champions. The result inched fourth-placed Liverpool closer to Champions League qualification, with a four-point lead over sixth-placed Bournemouth.

"I do," said Slot on whether he thinks he can regain the fans' backing. Not this season by the way. This season they will have their opinion and it will not change. If we can have the summer that we are planning to have, then I'm 100 percent convinced that we will be a different team next season than we are now."

Enzo Fernandez (right)

Chelsea can no longer mathematically finish in the top five and remain in ninth.

The Blues had lost six consecutive Premier League games to fall out of contention for a top-five place prior to the trip to Merseyside.

But a more obdurate performance provided some encouragement for interim boss Calum McFarlane to take into next weekend's FA Cup final against Manchester City.

Results: Liverpool: 1 (Gravenberch 6th) drew with Chelsea: 1 (Fernandez 35th); Brighton: 3 (Hinshelwood 1st, Dunk 5th, Minteh 86th) bt Wolves: 0; Fulham: 0 lt to Bournemouth: 1 (Rayan 53rd); Sunderland: 0 drew with Manchester United: 0.

Jaiswal, Shafali get NADA notices

Indian cricketers Yashasvi Jaiswal and Shafali Verma have been issued notices by the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) for not being available for scheduled dope tests last year, leading to their first whereabouts failure, reports PTI from New Delhi.

It is reliably learnt that the two players, who are a part of the NADA's Registered Testing Pool (RTP), did not explain the reasons for the missed tests, leading to the notices.

"Notices have been issued to the concerned athletes, and the same has been intimated to the national federation (the BCCI) and the ICC," a well-placed source said even though NADA declined to comment citing confidentiality of the procedure.

On being contacted, a BCCI source also confirmed the development.

WFI puts Vinesh's comeback on hold

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) on Saturday put Vinesh Phogat's much-awaited return at the Senior Open Ranking tournament in Gonda, UP, on hold, stating that she was ineligible to compete in any competition till June 26 for not fulfilling the mandatory six-month period of informing the world governing bodies of her return from retirement.

"On the basis of your letter/ email dated 12 December 2025 your minimum requirement of 6 months period has not yet expired and as a consequence, you shall not be eligible to participate in any WFI competitions and events till 26.06.2026..." the WFI wrote in its 15-page show-cause notice to the wrestler.

The WFI also alleged that Vinesh, in a December 14, 2024 e-mail to UWW Anti-Doping, had declared herself to be on a "sabbatical until August 2025" and indicated that she would resume compliance with whereabouts obligations only thereafter.

The body further levelled multiple allegations against Vinesh, accusing her of unsporting conduct, anti-doping rule violations on various incidents dating back to the trials before the 2024 Olympics. WFI has sought an explanation from her on all matters within 14 days while failure to do so will lead to serious consequences.

Vinesh Phogat

ALLEGATIONS

- WFI accuses Vinesh of violating UWW anti-doping return-from-retirement rules.
- The body cites a "missed test" recorded by the International Testing Agency (ITA) on December 18, 2025.
- The notice refers to an earlier whereabouts failure notice issued by NADA in September 2024, claiming non-compliance.
- It blames Vinesh's disqualification from the 2024 Olympics for damaging the reputation of Indian wrestling.
- WFI alleges that Vinesh violated UWW competition rules during the March 2024 Olympic selection trials by competing in two weight categories.
- WFI has granted the wrestler 14 days to respond to all the allegations.

Several attempts for a reaction from Vinesh and her camp on the notice went unanswered. She, however, tweeted a cryptic message on Twitter suggesting she won't bow down to power.

Sanjay Singh-led WFI further expressed its displeasure for Vinesh's much-discussed disqualification at the Paris Olympics due to a weigh-in failure. It also accused her of violating United World Wrestling's rules by competing in two weight categories of the Olympic trials in Patiala, which was conducted by an Indian Olympic Association-appointed ad-hoc committee back then.

The ad-hoc panel, led by Bhupinder Singh Bajwa, at the time allowed her to compete in 50kg and 53kg while the wrestler reasoned that the trials do not fall under UWW's purview as it's not a competition but internal trials to pick the team for the Olympics. She also stated that the reason for her to compete in two events was that she wasn't certain if WFI will allow her a fair chance at Olympic qualification after Antim Panghal won the quota in her forte 53kg category.

The WFI said complaints received by it had alleged that the delay caused disruption in the conduct of trials and adversely affected other wrestlers. It has asked Vinesh to explain why disciplinary proceedings should not be initiated against her under various provisions of the WFI Constitution.

WFI, meanwhile, also expressed its strong displeasure on Vinesh's whereabouts failure notice by the Indian anti-doping agency (NADA) back in September 2024, adding that the wrestling body wasn't apprised of her response on the matter.

The notice also referred to a May 4, 2026 communication from the International Testing Agency (ITA) regarding whereabouts failure on December 18. The federation said that although the ITA has treated the December 18, 2025 incident as the "first" whereabouts failure within the relevant 12-month period, WFI believes there exists a broader pattern of non-compliance.

The federation alleged that only six days after that communication, doping control officials were unable to locate her for testing on December 18, 2025, resulting in the ITA formally recording a missed test against her.

The WFI also referred to a previous whereabouts failure notice issued by NADA on September 25, 2024 after a dope control officer allegedly failed to locate her at her declared residence in Sonipat for an out-of-competition test earlier that month.

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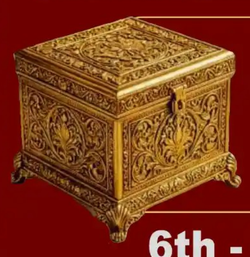

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Gary Cricketers prevail in Super Over finish

LOCAL CRICKET

BENGALURU, DHNS: Gary Cricketers prevailed in Super Over after their low-scoring match against National Cricketers ended in a tie in the KSCA Y S Ramaswamy Memorial Trophy tournament for the IV and V Division clubs here.

Brief scores: National Cricketers: 102 all out in 30.4 overs (Surya Thribhuvan HS 29; Nabhashrit 2-26, Mariya Williams T 4-22, Bharath Kulkarni 2-14) lt to Gary Cricketers: 102 all out in 28.5 overs (Sanath S Nair 2-23, Sai Ashrith K V 2-14, Ramesh 2-4). **SUPER OVER:** Gary Cricketers: 8/2 in 1 over bt National Cricketers: 6/1 in 1 over.

Jeevanbhimanagar Cricket Club: 224 all out in 44.4 overs (Lokadetya Tilak 25, Aarav Bajaj 31, Kayan Abbas 40, CB Kumar 46; Pavan NS 3-51, Aseef 2-39, Sharath TS 3-36) bt Headquarters Cricket Club: 153 all out in 28.3 overs (Sharat Gajanan Bhat 35, Pavan NS 28; Karan K Bokade 4-31, Mohammed Zaid Khan S 2-41, Preetham P 3-25).

City Cricketers (1): 238/6 in 26 overs (Thejas L 63, Rishik A 73, Sagar M 53 n.o.; Kruthik C 2-50) bt Young Cricketers (2): 148/8 in 26 overs (Athiqulla Khan 33; Thejas L 2-27, Punith Kumar G 4-32).

Anekal Town Cricket Club: 115 all out in 28.5 overs (M Neeraj 36; Chandan Chavan V 3-24, Purushotham Raghu 2-15) lt to Elite Blues Cricket Club: 116/3 in 16 overs (Nirmal Tejaswi S 45, Manish M S 36; Yashwantha 2-24).

Chamarajpet Cricket Club: 311/9 in 50 overs (Shiva Kumar N 77, Piyush Gohilot 105 n.o., Advait A Sathaye 37 n.o.; Ankith Krishna Bhargav 3-49, Manish N 3-51) bt BMS Engineering College: 70 all out in 24.2 overs (Gaurav Saxena 6-16, Nakul Swamy 4-3).

Silky Town Cricket Club, Channapatna: 280 all out in 42.1 overs (Chandrashekarmurthy K S 40; Mohammed Kashif A 50, Syed Shah Faraz 56, Srinivas Yadav 3-54, Samrat Donur 4-63) bt Sri Jayachamarajendra Cricket Club: 90 all out in 30.4 overs (Somashekara Murthy KS 2-17, Syed Asif Pasha 2-14, Jayanth HK 3-5).

Central College Cricket Club: 100 all out in 32.1 overs (Santosh Kumar Singh 4-33, Arjun KY 2-3) lt to Friends Union Cricketers, KGF: 102/0 in 8.4 overs (Ankush Boppanna 71 n.o.).

ACE Cricketers: 122 all out in 27.5 overs (Chayaank Pradeep 43; Sriniket LM Saragur 3-17, Supreeth R 5-30) lt to Magadi Cricket Club, Magadi: 126/3 in 15 overs (Mann Bhati 59 n.o., Sashvith Somanna M R 37 n.o.; Venugopal 2-45).

Deccan United Cricket Club: 288/9 in 33 overs (Panshul Sharma 36, Himanish Manoj 36, Paarth Madan 70, Salman Saiyadsab Shadulvale 47, Aniket Chaturvedi 26 n.o.; Daivik Chourey 2-33, Lohith S 3-68, Hemanth SG 3-19) bt BEL Colony Recreation Club: 212 all out in 31.4 overs (Raghavendra Ikkurthi 39, Lohith S 30, Uday Gowda Y 55; Aniket Chaturvedi 2-28, Prayag Bijesh 2-27, Paarth Madan 2-44).

Duleep Cricketers: 192 all out in 33.1 overs (Prem Kumar T 75, Shakeer Basha 27; Abhishek Yadav 4-36, Anoop Shukla 2-61, Manish Parasher 2-9) bt Oriental Cricket Club: 167 all out in 34.2 overs (Manish Parasher 69; Siddesh HR 3-21, Vikram R 2-18, Roshan Kumar 3-32).

Pukhraj wins tense play-off to lift ADT title

KUALA LUMPUR, PTI: Pukhraj Singh Gill, who held at least a share of the lead since the end of the first round, won the ADT Players Championship presented by The R&A, after a tense three-way play-off here.

A courageous Gill overcame a two-shot deficit over the last two holes and then finished off the job in extra holes at Saujana's Palm Course.

Gill (72), who plays for the team, Honer Homes Gurugram, on the IGPL, totalled 13-under as did Thanawin Lee (68) and Sean Ramos (68).

It took Gill two extra holes to secure the title.

Yuvraj makes cut

Yuvraj Sandhu was the lone Indian to make the cut at the Estrella Damm Catalunya Championship leaderboard, reports PTI from Barcelona.

Sandhu, who shot 4-under 68 on the first day, carded even par on the second day. He was placed at T-16.

BADMINTON JUNIOR NATIONALS

Abhinav, Shaina into finals

Karnataka shuttlers post contrasting wins in respective semifinals

BENGALURU, DHNS

It was a good outing for Karnataka on Saturday as most of the state's shuttlers scored semifinal victories to have at least one representation in the final of each of the five categories at the Yonex-Sunrise All India Junior (under-19) Ranking badminton tournament here.

Among them, Abhinav Garg scored a thrilling 21-9, 19-21, 21-19 win to knock out seventh seed Akhil Reddy Bobba of Telangana in the boys' singles semifinal. However, Abhinav's statemate went down 19-21, 13-21 to Telangana's Gnana Dattu TT in the other last-four encounter.

Karnataka's Shaina Manimuthu beat Tamil Nadu's Adarshini Shri in straight games to enter the Under-19 girls' singles final at the Karnataka Badminton Association on Saturday. X

In the girls' singles semifinal, top seed Shaina Manimuthu downed Tamil Nadu's Adarshini Shri NB 21-16, 21-15 to make her way into the final where the local girl will face Odisha's Tanvi Patri - who beat Haryana's Akshita Gulia 21-8, 21-9.

In the doubles section too unseeded pair Pavan S and Punith S from Karnataka advanced to the men's final, Diya Bheemaiah B -- who has teamed-up with Haryana's Baruni Parshwal -- will be in action in the women's section while eighth seeds Punith and partner Deepak Raj Aditi from the state will be in fray in the mixed doubles title clash.

Results (under-19 semifinals, prefix denotes seedings): Boys: Singles: Abhinav Garg (Kar) bt 7-Akhil Reddy Bobba (Tel) 21-9, 19-21, 21-19; 14-Gnana Dattu TT (Tel) bt Hardik Divyansh (Kar) 21-19, 21-13.

Doubles: Aanayan Borah (Asm)/ Bjorn Jaison (Ker) bt 4-Abhishek Bonu (AP)/ Sai Siddharth Rayaprolu (Tel) 21-16, 23-21; Pavan S/ Punith S (Kar) bt 8-Divyansh Agrawal (Chg)/ Amarjit Singh Khwairakpam (Mni) 21-13, 15-21, 21-15.

Girls: Singles: 1-Shaina Manimuthu (Kar) bt Adarshini Shri NB (TN) 21-16, 21-15; Tanvi Patri (Ori) bt Akshita Gulia (Har) 21-8, 21-9.

Doubles: Diya Bheemaiah B (Kar)/ Baruni Parshwal (Har) bt Durga Esha Kandrapu (AP)/ Keerthy Manchala (Tel) 21-10, 21-18; Anushkaa Jenniffer AS/ Dheeshitha Singha Gopinath Singh (TN) bt Varna Prabhuanand (TN)/ Suhina Roy (Kar) 21-18, 21-14.

Mixed doubles: Sainunmawia Sailo (Miz)/ Rishita Pandey (Tel) bt Mohmmad Ali Mir (Guj)/ Shambhavi Rauthan (Utk) 21-19, 14-21, 21-14; 8-Punith S/ Deepak Raj Aditi (Kar) bt Jangjeet Singh Kajla (Raj)/ Angel Punera (Utk) 19-21, 21-19, 21-18.

F1 engines to change again in 2027

PARIS, AFP: Formula One bosses have responded to the criticism of this season's power unit modifications by agreeing to "further evolutionary changes" before a revamp for the 2027 season, the FIA announced on Friday.

Motorsport's governing body said that an agreement had been reached "in principle" between the 11 team bosses and five power unit manufacturers to restore the primacy of combustion power over electric power as early as 2027.

"The measures agreed in principle today for 2027 would see a nominal increase in internal combustion engine power by 50 kilowatts with a fuel-flow increase and a nominal reduction of the energy recovery system deployment power by 50 kilowatts," the FIA said in a statement.

This decision would in effect put an end to the 50/50 parity in hybrid engines.

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Sd/- Sharath.G, Secretary

PUBLIC NOTICE

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CHANGE OF NAME
I, DHEEP SOMAIAH Residing at No. 32, Sri Manjunatha Nilaya, Anand Nagar, Marathahalli, Bengaluru- 560037, have changed my name to P R DHEEP SOMAIAH vide affidavit dated 08.05.2026 before Notary C.V. Earappa, Bengaluru. Henceforth I shall be known as P R DHEEP SOMAIAH only.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, NAGARAJU LAKKANNA S/o LAKKANNA, Residing at No. 140, 2nd 'A' Main, 8th Cross, Bairaveshwaranagar, Laggere, Bengaluru- 560058, have changed my name to NAGARAJ L, S/o H.S. LAKKANNA, vide affidavit dated 23.04.2026 before Notary V. Anjanappa, Bengaluru. Henceforth I shall be known as NAGARAJ L only.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, Rugmini Parasuraman, residing at No. 109, Anjaneya Apartments, G M Palya New Tippasadra Post Bengaluru-560075, have changed my name to P V RUGMINI for all purposes vide affidavit dated 08-05-2026 before notary M Rajendra, Bengaluru. Henceforth I shall be called P V RUGMINI only

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EMPIRE OF THE MIND

The politics of denial: When defeat becomes distrust

Gurucharan Gollerkeri
The former civil servant enjoys traversing the myriad spaces of ideas, thinkers, and books

India has just concluded another extraordinary electoral exercise. Across four states and a Union Territory, millions voted in sweltering heat, long queues, crowded urban booths, remote villages, insurgency-prone districts, and difficult terrains. Women voters turned out in unprecedented numbers. Participation rates touched historic highs. By any democratic measure, this should have been a moment of collective pride. Instead, it has rapidly degenerated into a familiar ritual of accusation.

Political parties that face electoral defeat have once again reached for a well-worn political script: blame the Election Commission of India (ECI), allege manipulation, claim votes were stolen, and increasingly, suggest that entire elections have been subverted. The irony, of course, is glaring. The very same ECI conducted elections in states where these very parties emerged victorious. There, the institution was evidently impartial, credible, and constitutional. Elsewhere, it became compromised, partisan, and suspect. What is sauce for the goose, it appears, is not sauce for the gander.

This selective faith in democratic institutions is deeply corrosive. The recent spectacle of a defeated chief minister refusing to accept the verdict, refusing to resign, marks a troubling descent in democratic conduct. The rhetoric of victimhood has replaced the responsibility of introspection. Electoral setbacks are increasingly explained not through political misjudgement, organisational failure, weak governance, or loss of public trust, but through conspiracy theories and institutional delegitimisation. This trend carries grave consequences.

Constitutional bodies derive their authority not from force, but from public trust. Every reckless allegation chips away at that trust. The ECI is not an ordinary institution. It is one of the great achievements of the Indian republic – painstakingly built over decades through administrative discipline, constitutional restraint, and public confidence.

When India became independent, many Western observers doubted whether universal adult franchise could survive in a poor, diverse, largely illiterate nation of continental proportions. Yet, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, B R Ambedkar, Rajendra Prasad, and the other architects of the republic took an audacious leap of faith. They trusted the Indian people before India had even learned to trust itself. That faith was vindicated.

Under the stewardship of India's first Chief Election Commissioner, Sukumar Sen, the country conducted the first general election of 1951-52 – an exercise unparalleled in human history. Ballot boxes were transported by bullock carts, boats, mules, and sometimes even elephants. Electoral rolls had to be prepared for hundreds of millions, many of whom had never before participated in any political process. Yet the election succeeded magnificently.

Over the decades, the ECI evolved into one of the most respected electoral institutions in the world. India's elections became admired not merely for their scale, but for their resilience, efficiency, and legitimacy. Governments fell. Powerful leaders lost. Opposition parties rose to power repeatedly through the ballot box. The peaceful transfer of power became routine – the surest sign of democratic maturity. This legacy was not built overnight. Nor can it survive endless political assault.

Criticism of institutions is legitimate in a democracy. Democratic institutions must always remain open to scrutiny and reform, but scrutiny without evidence degenerates into delegitimisation. Today, allegations are often made first and substantiated never. Defeat automatically becomes proof of fraud. The courts are approached, judgments are delivered, and when those judgments do not align with political expectations, even the judiciary is subtly cast under suspicion. This is not democratic vigilance. It is deliberate delegitimisation.

A standout feature in the recent elections came from West Bengal. For perhaps the first time in many years, elections in several areas were widely perceived as orderly, relatively peaceful, and free from the fear that has often accompanied polling in the state. Citizens voted without intimidation, thanks to the ECI's efforts. That must be celebrated across party lines as a victory for democracy itself. Ironically, even peaceful conduct has become grounds for suspicion because the electoral verdict proves inconvenient.

If citizens are repeatedly told that elections are stolen, institutions are compromised, and mandates are fraudulent, public faith in democracy begins to weaken. Cynicism replaces participation. Distrust replaces legitimacy. The loser's refusal to concede eventually becomes the voter's refusal to believe. And no democracy can endure for long in such an atmosphere.

India's democratic strength does not lie in the certainty that one's preferred party will win. It lies in the confidence that elections are fundamentally fair, that institutions remain constitutional, and that the people's verdict will be honoured. Democracies mature not when political actors celebrate victory, but when they accept defeat with dignity.

The republic entrusted us with universal suffrage before we were prosperous, educated, or unified. The least we owe that republic is institutional seriousness and democratic restraint. We cannot demand faith from citizens while political leaders themselves display none. If India is to remain not merely the world's largest democracy, but one of its most enduring, this politics of perpetual delegitimisation must stop.

JUDGMENT DAY

Echoes from the Tokyo Trial

In the post-Trump world, international law has got itself into a tangle. The President has publicly proclaimed that he is not really constrained by international law; that his only constraint is what he believes to be the right thing to do. Previous American governments, even if they shared Trump's views in private, treaded carefully when it came to deviating from international agreements. Trump has taken a sledgehammer to international law; the United States has retreated from international agreements across the spectrum: trade law, environment law, public health, and nuclear disarmament.

I notice that many international law professors have paused in their analysis of the finer points of international law to defend the idea of international law itself. International law's existential crisis is not new. Exactly eighty years ago, an international criminal trial raised similar issues about the legitimacy of international law. This case is important to us, partly because it involved a famous dissent by an Indian judge.

After the Second World War, in 1946, the Allied powers tried Japanese military and political officials for war crimes at the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, popularly known as the Tokyo Trial. The accused were tried for different kinds of crimes under international humanitarian law, including 'crimes of aggression' for waging wars without justification and 'crimes against humanity' for killing innocent civilians. While the tribunal – comprising judges representing 11 countries – convicted the accused, Justice Radhabinod Pal from Calcutta, India, wrote a powerful opinion dissenting from the majority.

Justice Pal's 1,235-page dissenting judgment acquitted the Japanese of their alleged crimes. Stripped of technicalities, his dissent made two independent points. He exposed the hypocrisy of the Allied powers by arguing that convicting the Japanese for crimes against international peace, security, and humanity would be unfair when the Allied nations were also guilty of similar crimes. After all, by the time the Tokyo Trial began, the US had dropped nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Justice Pal's second proposition was more interesting. He pointed out that international law norms ought to be in place before they are enforced. They can't be retrospective in character. Crimes of aggression and crimes against humanity were not established in any international instrument at the time of the Tokyo Trial. Justice Pal was disinclined to punish someone under international law unless nations had agreed upon rules covering such situations.

Nigam Nuggehalli
is a law professor who thinks that the law is too important to be left to the lawyers
nsnigam@gmail.com

What contemporary lessons can we draw from this case? For starters, the lack of agreement on international norms and the hypocrisy in powerful nations invoking international law only so long as and until it is convenient for them were features of the international zeitgeist then just as they are now. Justice Pal brought this out vividly at a time when India was finding its place in the world. It was an act of courage and a dissent of intent. He respected international law but wanted it to be understood and applied in a way that was consistent with fair play and international comity. International law cannot be merely the victor's justice.

The world is disenchanted with international law, but can it afford to be? If international law were merely a fig leaf for self-interest, this would be understandable, but should we hold such a cynical view of the law? International law has its success stories. The Chemical Weapons Convention, signed by 193 nations, has ensured that the use of chemical weapons has been contained significantly. But the Tokyo Trial teaches us that international law does not succeed in a top-down approach; that it works only when it's supported by a unanimous or near-unanimous consensus among states, and is based on principles that are not seen as unfair and self-serving. Perhaps this brings international law close to international politics, and if so, we are better off appreciating its limitations, lest we burden it with unreal expectations.

The afterlife of the Tokyo Trial is also interesting to behold. Justice Pal had a quietly dignified career in India and was revered in Japan for his dissent, with shrines dedicated to his memory. But he was not really a significant figure in the Indian public imagination until Netflix came up with its dramatisation of the Tokyo Trial. Irrfan Khan played Justice Pal in the drama series. Even the Netflix series spends more time on the judge from the Netherlands, who had a mildly rebellious role to play. But Justice Pal will be remembered both for his condemnation of international law and his respect for it.

THE LIVING STREAM

Democracy without elections?

Elections cannot exist without a democracy. Can a democracy exist without elections?

Exorbitant campaign expenses, the manipulative power of opinion polls and corporate-run mass media, and the immense clout of lobby groups, among others, have come to subvert elections and routinely throw up governments with little scope for genuine citizen participation. Can the procedures for deciding on issues of public interest be shielded from partisan capture? Can political power become less remote and more amenable to citizen participation?

Several theorists have passionately probed alternatives to Western electoral democracies: John Burnheim, the Australian political scientist (*Is Democracy Possible?; The Demarchy Manifesto*), James Fishkin, the American political scientist (*When the People Speak; Democracy When the People Are Thinking*), Terry Bouricius, former American politician (*Democracy without Politicians*); Hélène Landemore, the French political scientist (*Open Democracy; Politics without Politicians*), and David Van Reybrouck, the Belgian writer (*Against Elections*).

These theorists advocate the forming of citizen assemblies where members are recruited through random lottery rather than elections. This method – sortition – is known to have prevailed in ancient Athens, where several public offices were filled by lot since elections were seen as susceptible to the influence of wealth and elite power. The contemporary advocates of sortition similarly wish to eliminate corruption and political influence in how issues of the public good are decided.

Recruited through lots for a limited term, the citizens' juries or assemblies deliberate on matters of public relevance openly. They can access domain specialists if needed. Their membership size, their remuneration, the duration of their term, among others, will vary across countries, but it is key that the citizens' bodies are sufficiently representative of the diversity of local society. Some argue that these bodies ought to include those directly affected by policy decisions who then negotiate and coordinate their decisions with other bodies.

Should citizens' groups be funded by independent public foundations unconnected to political parties or commercial interests and sustained solely through voluntary contributions? Is it better that social movements take the lead to institute these groups rather than politicians? Or can governments legitimately allocate public funds for the creation and functioning of these bodies? Views vary on this front as well.

Chandan Gowda
The Vidyashilp Professor looks for new ways of looking
@Chandan_Gowda73

Sortition makes democracy less about the sharing of power through elections and more about reliable ways of making public decisions. It shifts focus from the national interest to the interests of many small publics.

Advocates of sortition rarely ask that citizens' bodies should possess legislative authority. They contend instead that elected representatives should be obliged to respect the deliberative processes of citizens' bodies. By supplementing representative democracy, sortition can infuse fresh vitality to a system fatigued by the rigid routines of electoral politics. This discussion is not purely a theoretical one: between 2004 and 2013, Ireland, Iceland, Canada, and the Netherlands constituted randomly drawn citizens groups to deliberate over electoral law reform.

Does this discussion have any significance for India? Gandhi's skepticism towards parliamentary-style representative democracy, together with his advocacy of small-scale political and economic units that placed local communities in charge of matters affecting them directly, is of course legendary. Intense discussions and initiatives in participatory governance and decentralisation of power have occurred here for decades. But they are not usually presented as efforts to revitalise a strained electoral system that is short-changing Indian democracy. Many concerned Indians have indeed proposed a variety of electoral reforms to help protect the sanctity of elections. They nevertheless allow elections to narrow the imagination of Indian democracy into a one-dimensional affair. Sortition, along with other models better suited to Indian conditions, that can create legitimate spaces for rethinking this election-driven model of democracy, needs to be explored. New pathways for enabling robust citizen participation in policy and governance processes, and for revitalising Indian democracy in a complementary spirit, need to be urgently explored.

GADFLY

Vijay and the regrets of Rajinikanth

As Joseph Vijay led the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) close to victory in the milestone Assembly elections in Tamil Nadu last week, this writer kept pondering on the possible reflections of another matinee idol, an older and arguably more illustrious man, who harboured such ambitions for eons; who kept on sending mixed signals over it; who may have felt such success should have been due him, but if and only if (in his view) circumstances had been more helpful. Oh, how he must have loved the idea of jumping into the political cauldron and emerging like a don in Tamil politics, just like his cinema predecessors? As the election results rolled in, this writer couldn't help but think about the possible sighs, stares, and punchlines an enigmatic figure like Rajinikanth—the superstar of the 1980s, 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s—would have delivered to crazed fans. After the results, he congratulated Vijay and the TVK. To me, an irony of ironies.

Male Tamil stars like Vijay (and even Ajith Kumar and Suriya) derive their cinematic persona from Rajinikanth, who in turn drew his from M G Ramachandran. What are their unsubtle characteristics that hark back seven decades? They are champions of the underdog, pro-poor, anti-rich, anti-corrupt, anti-powerful, protectors and promoters of Tamil pride, Tamil heteronormative masculinity, and machismo (and moustaches). They are ever-helpful next-door neighbours going out of the way to aid the aged, the disabled, and the indigent, and at the same time, wooing that (usually) fair-skinned heroine (or two). They bring to life many aspirations and fantasies coursing through the veins of Tamilians, through some 'punch dialogues', signalling veiled or not-so-veiled messages on their messianic nature, imminent social transformation, and their entry with a bang into politics.

Across many of his hits, Vijay dished out an updated avatar of Rajinikanth, who had, in turn, extended and updated the MGR persona. In mass entertainers, cliché after cliché after cliché has produced innumerable commercial sensations over the last 70 years of Tamil cinema. Many of these films were mind-numbing, perhaps helping to enthrone their stars. Minimal subtlety is a striking idiom of many of these popular star vehicles.

Rahul Jayaram
teaches at the School of Film, Media and Creative Arts, R V University, Bengaluru
@rahjayaram

As the historians' cliché goes, what looked impossible once, after the watershed, now seems inevitable. It's tempting to think that Vijay arrived at the right time, in a post-Jayalalitha, and -Karunanidhi era, in a vacuum awaiting capture. Yet the perils were genuine, and the stakes huge. Vijay displayed relatively clear thinking in sticking to seeming non-negotiables in Tamil politics: embodying Dravidian-ness, appearing critical of Hindutva, yet portraying the incumbent DMK as its immediate adversary. He either espoused or eschewed some cliché or norm of Tamil political life. All this through his huge fan base cultivated over decades. It's unfair to think Vijay happened to only capitalise on the ground his forerunner Rajinikanth paved for him to leverage and steer, using his own stamp and tune. Truth is, if Vijay could do this now, what stopped Rajinikanth from biting the electoral bullet earlier? His fan following was arguably mightier.

It's one of the great 'what ifs': Why did Rajinikanth not take the plunge? Yes, his stardom paralleled the DMK and the AIADMK at their peak over the last 40 years. Still, cinema stars like N T Rama Rao in Andhra Pradesh gambled and played the big game in line with their reel persona. In somewhat easier circumstances, so has Vijay. It could have easily gone awry for him, too. Yet he succeeded simply because of his ability, like a true superstar, to play the big game and set it up over many years. In contrast, even Kamal Haasan has shown hardiness, although he was never as popular as Rajinikanth. A much lesser star like the late Vijayakanth, too, attempted to overcome his limitations and circumstances.

Now, a younger Vijay makes one reassess an older Rajinikanth, and still makes one ponder: why didn't the latter have the conviction to enter politics? Unlike the reel Rajini, perhaps the real Rajini is more human than hero, fearful of failure, sceptical of succeeding. Yet the truth is, he did have a chance, even if he had to fight two titans at the peak of their dominance. That he didn't take it will probably remain a regret for the man himself; and his choice may also have denied the rest of us an alternate story arc with all the trappings of a full-blown mass entertainer.

STATE, MARKET, SOCIETY

AI can deepen democratic governance. Is the state ready?

Ashwin Mahesh
A social entrepreneur, founder of Mapunity and LVBL, and co-founder, Lithium, wakes up with hope for the city and society, goes to bed with a sigh
@ashwinmahesh

There has been a lot of talk about what Artificial Intelligence will do to the economy. In particular, there has been concern that it will eliminate many well-paying jobs as companies adopt AI more. There has also been some coverage of how AI is increasing productivity in other sectors – generative diagnostics in healthcare, predictively balancing vast electricity grids, forecasting wildfires, etc.

Market and society are seeing their own adoption rates of the new technologies, but what about the state? While there has been some use of AI in public administration, we have barely scratched the surface. The number of AI-driven *sarkari* applications will grow, but why stop with administration? Why not ask: What can be done with emerging technologies for democratic governance itself?

This is a bus we have largely not boarded. Even as technology became ubiquitous, governments adopted it slowly, often doing the same old things digitally. One obstacle was limited knowledge of emerging capabilities; governments are poor at training their people. But a second, bigger hurdle was plain unwillingness. The *status quo* suited those in the state. It even suited those in the opposition, for one day they might be in power!

When will democracies bound across this steeplechase? One doesn't have to be a soothsayer to imagine that things will change, somewhere, sometime. To understand why, let's look back a little.

Around the world, democratic governments have expanded enormously, doing far more than they did in the past. Leaders, once in power, widen the scope of state intervention. But representative democracy was not meant to be a battleground for competing agendas. It was to enable people to influence the processes and rules governing them.

Today, technology has removed many of the early hurdles that necessitated representation. It is far easier for people to directly vote on legislation tabled in the state Assembly or even Parliament. If our representative is only pressing a button on our behalf, surely that can be done by us in our homes.

This is particularly true when those making decisions are not even reading the material needed to make them. So many bills are passed in representative bodies with hardly any discussion. These cannot be called 'representative' action. If my MLA has no time or inclination to read a draft Bill, why not let me do it myself?

Many of the standard answers – not everyone can make informed decisions, not everyone has time, etc. – are jaded. Some do have the time, inclination, and ability to read, understand, and decide. And if people were able to make more choices themselves, they might start making the time and having the inclination to do so.

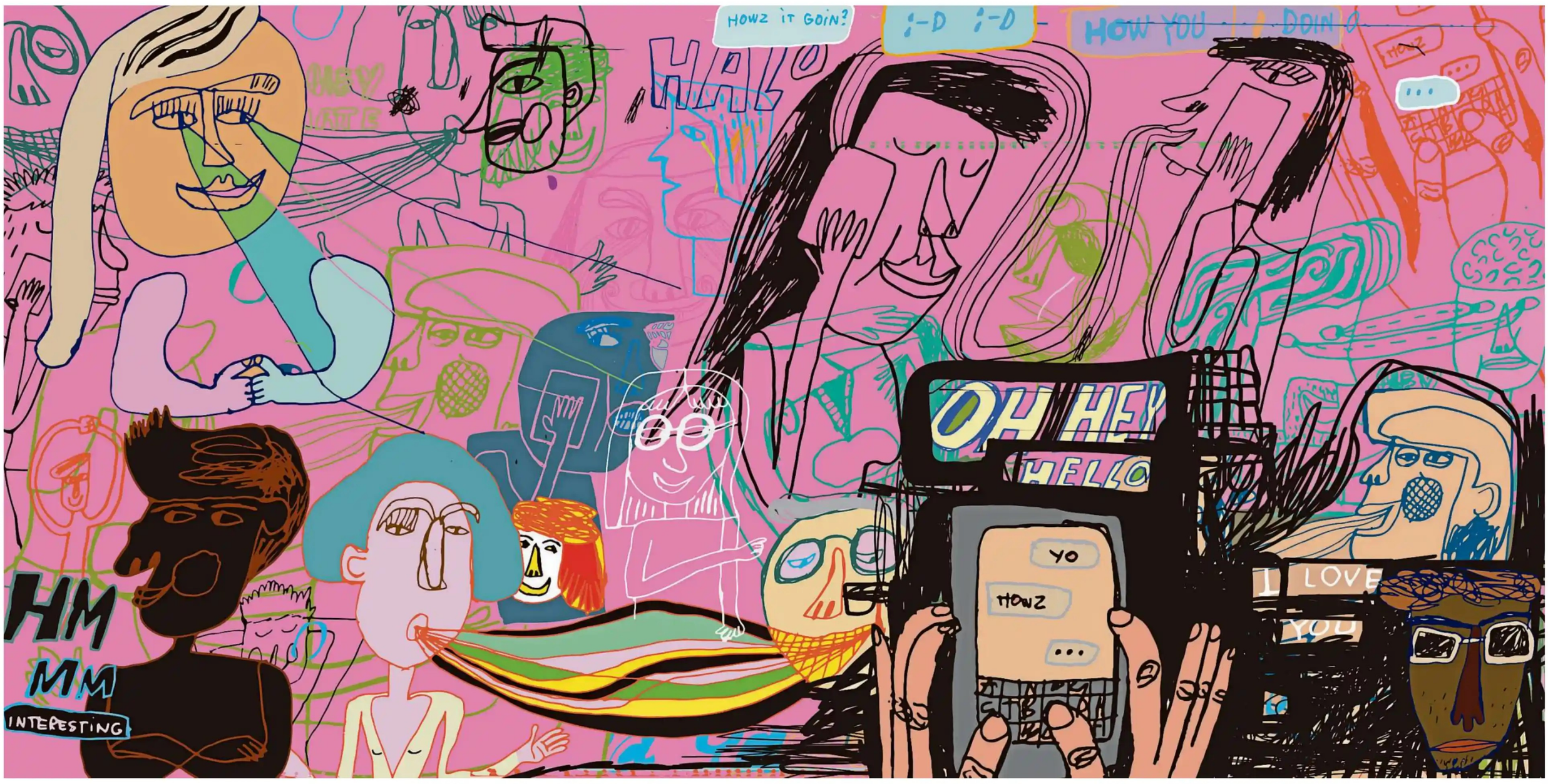
This may seem far-fetched on the scale of a nation or a state, but it's not that difficult to imagine if we're voting on how local ward budgets should be spent. People in Switzerland have been voting on micro-issues: things like changing a bus route. At that scale, a lot is doable. Perhaps that's the way things will change; slowly and locally at first, then in slightly larger settings, then suddenly.

One problem that AI has reduced greatly is the asymmetry of information between the state and the people. Governments hold a lot of information, and citizens don't know even one per cent of it. But there is an irony here: those in government themselves don't know much about what is happening, because each department withholds information from others, or they don't proactively share it. Intelligent agents can help. Around the world, governments are opening their datasets and inviting the public to help tackle problems. Bridging the democratic distance between voters and decision-makers will gather pace.

Tinkering with this is exciting. Earlier this year, after my visit to Kalaburagi, I was keen to figure out what can be done to develop a backward district like that, and what state and national governments are doing. Working with Sathya Sankaran – well known as our city's Bicycle Mayor – I discovered that Claude could compile, categorise, and present this information in less than a few hours for a few thousand rupees.

I've shown this work to District Collectors and ministers in charge of districts, and they see its potential. Another version of the same tool can be built for cities. The same Claude brain turned the budget speech of the Bengaluru South Corporation into a trackable platform for the promises listed in it. For as little as a few hundred rupees of tokens! Making something for a local ward should be – and may one day be – a middle school project.

Government should be for the people and of the people, but the part that holds the most potential is the 'by the people'. And it is getting a major boost from AI.



Plugged in, tuned out

Our relationships today are paradoxical. We are highly connected yet emotionally isolated. We indulge in ghosting and phubbing. Complex human interactions are being replaced by curated digital personas, contributing to a decline in emotional safety and the erosion of social muscles. What then happens to real bonds amid the pursuit of such digital validation, wonders **Smitha Murthy**

"We expect more from technology and less from each other."

Sherry Turkle, author of Alone Together

Sherry Turkle wrote this book in 2011, but those words ring true even now. We are lonely, but fear intimacy, she wrote. "We'd rather text than talk." There's more. "Human relationships are rich, and they're messy, and they're demanding. And we clean them up with technology," she despaired.

Ultimately, "does virtual intimacy degrade our experience of the other kind and, indeed, of all encounters, of any kind?" Sherry asked.

I wish I could say no, Sherry, but increasingly, I have come to the realisation that our connection to technology has changed the way we communicate. And often, not in a nice way. This year, at least two people I was connected with, digitally ghosted me. Abruptly, with no warning. I found myself scrolling through the chats, wondering if I had been rude or abrasive. Because that's the thing with ghosting: convenient for the ghoster but worrisome for the ghosted.

Ghosting ain't new

Ghosting, you might think, is a modern phenomenon. But humans have been disconnecting from each other abruptly for decades. It's technology that has given impetus to this classic human trait of avoidance. Ghosting became so common that Merriam-Webster added the word to its dictionary in 2017. These days, our social network can be vast. We manage not just our family, friends, or colleagues, but also our hundreds and thousands of connections online, be it on Instagram, Facebook, or LinkedIn. And we have to deal with moody algorithms, AI companions, and depend on dopamine for connection. Sahana from LinkedIn may be your best 'online' friend until you wake up the next day and find that she has blocked you. For some, this can be deeply destabilising. For some others, it's just another digital casualty to be shrugged off on their way to the next like.

I grew up in a mostly analog world. There was a long waitlist just to get a landline. I saw televisions change colour. Channels expand from just trusty Doordarshan to Star World and MTV. I had "pen pals" and would write letters to a stranger in the Netherlands. Then, when email arrived, conversations moved to chat rooms. Strange worlds with strange nicknames. It was here that I realised that you can fake an entire identity. Rahul from Mumbai could pretend to be Ravina from Chennai, and no one would know. Was it here that we started changing the way we communicate? Because we started to assume differing identities. Abhishek, a "soft-spoken" lad from Tumkur, could turn out to be a foul-mouthed, abusive CaptainBatman on Twitter (now X). Some discovered that they can extend flirting to thousands of online personalities, and live guilt-free, assuming that this wasn't really 'cheating' on their partner.

When I got my first phone in 2004, it was clunky and expensive. Even though incoming calls were charged, I experienced a sudden crush of expectations. Now, you were accountable. People could call you anytime. And if you didn't answer, they would get offended. Suddenly, you were learning to text, typing painfully on keyboards meant for mouse-like hands. No one gave us training on how to text. Once, someone told me that I had been rude to them. Why? Because I had just said, "k" to their message. Baffled, I asked what I should have said. "Okay, that's fine," they answered.

And then social media happened, adding newer dimensions to our confusion.

Social media networks such as Facebook, the now-extinct Orkut, and Instagram fed on our desire for vanity, appreciation, and connection. I am unsure if these networks fulfil a desire for connection or a desire for appreciation, and I suspect it's often the latter.

Shots of dopamine

Being online and having a fan following gives us attention. We thrive in portraying lives of spotless glamour, perfect companionship, and wonderful families. Every like is a shot of dopamine, and we need more and more of it. These days, I tire of online interactions. WhatsApp messages drain me, and I find it enervating to respond to comments and DMs, leaving me with little emotional bandwidth for offline folks or interactions.

How did we get here? Why are we constantly connecting, disconnecting, ghosting, and blocking? Dr Mahima Sahi works a lot with couples in her profession as a trauma-informed therapist for high-functioning adults. She acknowledges that there's been a definite shift in the depth and texture of the questions people come to her with. "I hear things like: "How do I navigate a relationship that feels emotionally confusing?", "How do I make sense of my family without constantly feeling triggered?", or "Why do I keep needing validation from others?" There's also a growing struggle around boundaries, especially in a world that's always "on" or questions like "How do I say no without guilt?" or "How do I stay connected without feeling consumed?"

Validation. Triggers. Guilt. Confusion.

She packs quite a punch there in depicting today's modern relationships. Many times, couples sit across from her and complain that "we just can't communicate." But what does that even mean? Dr Mahima explains that most of the time, those who approach her to deal with conflict aren't describing a lack of communication skills. "They are describing a lack of emotional safety."

"In the room, it often becomes clear that both people know how to express themselves. But something about the relationship makes it feel risky to do so. There's fear of being misunderstood, dismissed, or escalated. So what looks like a communication breakdown is often a safety breakdown," she explains. I have experienced that often, stifling myself because I know that expressing any discomfort would strain the relationship. Confrontation appears scary when we lack emotional safety.

Conflict repair is the key

John Gottman's decades of couples research show the single biggest predictor of relationship health isn't how much conflict a couple has but whether they repair after conflict. Repair requires us to sit through moments that feel awkward, vulnerable, or uncertain and to stay long enough to experience that the relationship can hold it. "That's where trust slowly rebuilds," suggests Dr Mahima. Repair doesn't have to be a big conversation. Research shows that even small repair attempts, such as a joke or touch, are just as effective as drawn-out conversations.

Post-pandemic, multiple studies show what researchers are calling "social muscle atrophy." A fancy term for the erosion of our capacity for sustained, in-person emotional engagement after prolonged isolation. What's more, people avoid conflicts, and if they must, use text to communicate bad news. It feels safer, but it also strips tone and context and can result in even more misunderstanding. Instead, match the medium to the match. The weight of what you are saying should determine where you say it. For logistics, text. Conflict, care, or an apology — a call or even a meeting. If not, use voice notes.

Digital overwhelm

Time was when we would go pubbing, but now we are "phubbing" more often these days — where we keep checking our phones even in the presence of others. Research from James Roberts at Baylor University shows that phubbing directly lowers relationship satisfaction and trust. The solution is not a phone ban, but phone agreements. Have an agreement on phone stacking during bonding times, such as dinner (phone face down). Establish smartphone-free zones. Not so for Ankita Shaw, a 24-year-old content writer. Her best friend is someone she has never met, despite knowing each other for four years. She has been ghosted many times, and walks an emotional tightrope at home with fractured family relationships. She confesses that sometimes she avoids responding to someone because she is overwhelmed or doesn't know what to say. Digital overwhelm is so real. Our brains weren't designed for the complexity of processing hundreds of messages every day, and the conflicts that crop up with these. But a cooling-off period helps. Set a 24-hour rule before responding to emotionally charged messages.

It also helps to name your communication style explicitly. Create a communication contract. Many digital communication breakdowns happen because of unmet, unstated expectations, especially around response time. Discuss with your friends and family on response times, when to switch to calls for serious topics, or to clarify read receipts.

Dr Mahima also suggests we work on expanding our emotional tolerance muscle. "One thing I find myself coming back to, both personally and clinically, is expanding what we call the "window of tolerance," i.e., our ability to stay present with discomfort without shutting down or escalating."

In addition, naming our emotions reduces the duration of conflicts. We often don't explore what we are really feeling, resorting to superficial, "I am hurt or angry" comments. Emotions are a bit more granular than that. Lisa Feldman Barrett showed that people who can precisely name what they're feeling ("I feel overlooked" vs. "I feel bad") have shorter, less destructive conflicts. It's not about perfect communication, Dr Mahima avers, but more about building the capacity to express, stay, repair, and reconnect.

Building that takes time. Patience. Empathy. Commitment. And love. Digital or not, modern or analog, these are qualities that never go out of fashion. Yes, we'd rather text than talk, as Sherry Turkle wrote. But we'd rather build than destroy, communicate rather than ghost, and repair rather than ruin, wouldn't we?

The author is a writer, speaker, and co-founder of MyndStories, an inclusive content-led mental health platform.

Talking past each other

A 2025 research report by MyndStories and eMbrace identified six patterns now fracturing modern relationships across romance, friendship, and family. The core finding: Modern relationships rarely collapse from conflict. They dissolve from unrepaired distance.

The six patterns

1: Fragmented, asynchronous communication that destroys shared emotional context
2: Conflict avoidance disguised as boundary-setting
3: Therapy language, such as "I need space," "I can't engage with this," is used to close conversations rather than open them
4: Emotional processing outsourced to friends, social media, or AI instead of happening within the relationship
5: Smartphone distraction creating repeated micro-moments of not being seen
6: Repair fatigue or the exhaustion of going back, so increased ghosting

MIXED BAG

***'Mixed Bag' is your Sunday potpourri** — an assortment of snappy articles, engaging ideas and snackable nibbles about this and that, from here and there. Dip in!*

In a fractured world, I turn to trees

As the world teeters on fragility and grows more fragmented with each passing day, I find myself increasingly seeking solace in nature, in trees in particular.

I've always had a weakness for trees — large, widespread branches seemingly touching the clouds high up in the sky. Reaching up, up up — as my yoga instructor says, "lengthening the spine" — sometimes even further than my eye can follow. Fat, gnarled, brown tree trunks that are bumpy, scarred, and uneven, but seem to whisper of stability, groundedness, and solidness. A reassuring, "I've got you vibe" seems to emanate from these mighty blocks of wood.

And leaves! Multiple hues of green that seem to fly freely in the breeze, with a lightness of being, while being safely anchored to branches. With that safety comes the ability to give. They're kind and flexible, and they always, always dance this way and that to allow the rays of the sun to find a way through them and down to us. They let the light in, even on our darkest days.

I fleetingly remember my school inviting Dr Elaine Charles to speak to us as we were preparing for our Grade 10 board exams. I remember one of her tips was to break the long bouts of study, of staring at words in paper textbooks, by looking at the green leaves of trees or plants for three to five minutes. "The colour green," she'd said, "relaxes the brain and the eyes." This was before the complete hijacking of all our senses by technology; this was in the pre-mobile, pre-digital era. A simpler time, a time when Google was a word we hadn't even come across. And yet, even then, trees had this power to calm us. To lower stress levels and reduce cortisol. Just by looking at them.

A few years ago, I'd taken a course in MBSR (Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction). One of the exercises we had to do was to go on a mindfulness walk. We had to slowly walk in a garden and stop to observe the texture of the bark of a tree, the varying shades of green on a leaf, shadows dancing lightly across it, a dried flower hanging by a thread, moving in the gentle breeze, waiting, but not yet released to the ground. All incredibly calming and soothing for the soul. I remember savouring how that walk slowed me down and insistently pulled my attention to the present moment.

I feel bits and pieces of me, through so many stages of my life, are interwoven with trees. So, at this time of mental fatigue, and news of war and destruction, and images of missiles and bomb blasts, and politicians updating their social media handles with no care for tone or word choice, maybe it isn't such a surprise after all that I find myself fervently reaching out to nature, and to trees in particular, to gently hold space for me and allow me to rest, restore and recover. Not so much to make sense of the world again, I'm not sure that's even a possibility anymore, but to heal.

Perhaps that is the quiet wisdom that trees offer us. They do not rush to fix the chaos of the world, nor do they shout above it. They simply stand — rooted, patient, steady, rock solid. Maybe I'm hoping that I will always remember the lessons I learnt from trees. To pause. To stand tall. To breathe. To stay grounded even when the winds around me grow wild. To trust that, like these trees, I too can hold my ground, reach for the light, and endure.

Nalini Sorensen

FEEDBACK
Like this story? Write to us at **dhonsunday@deccanherald.co.in**

ASTROSPEAK
Guruji Shrii Arnav

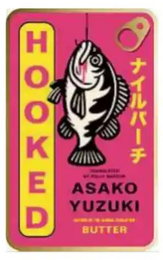
Scan the QR code to read the ***weekly horoscope***

Hooked is striking because of the way it portrays the complexity of women's worlds without any apparent resolution and with no clean moral binaries, writes Anjali Chauhan

Messy realities uneasy truths

Hooked by Asako Yuzuki (translated by Polly Barton) reads like a multiverse of women and womanhoods colliding, overlapping, and refusing containment. In a literary landscape where women are often written as narrative scaffolding, orbiting male protagonists, sharpening their character arcs, and absorbing their crises, Yuzuki offers something closer to a counter-fiction.

Here, women do not merely exist in relation to men, but exist fully and messily in relation to each other, as subjects of their own desires, anxieties, and contradictions. Their lives unfold through dense backstories and uneven trajectories, as they push through a maze structured by forces that repeatedly displace them to the margins even as they attempt to claim space. Men recede into the background, occasionally functional and rarely central, no longer anchoring either the movement of the plot or the meaning of women's lives. What emerges instead is a darkly intimate and unsettling cartography of urban womanhood, marked by accelerated rhythms of living, competitive self-fashioning, and a persistent sense of alienation that shadows even the most intimate connections.



HOOKED
Asako Yuzuki
Fourth Estate, pp 400, Rs 699

At the centre of this cartography is the volatile, almost romantic intensity of the relationship between Eriko and Shoko. Eriko is a career-driven woman from a well-to-do family, with a stable income in a trading company, born and raised in Tokyo, and deeply invested in a life structured by discipline and control. Shoko, in contrast, is a housewife and blogger from a fractured family who writes about her everyday domestic life with her husband.

Their friendship unfolds with the grammar of desire, marked by longing, projection, dependency, and eventual suffocation, where recognition quickly turns into toxic attachment. What begins as a tentative connection between two lonely women in their thirties gradually spirals into a relationship that is as fragile as it is coercive, intimate yet deeply unsettling.

Yuzuki resists the temptation to sentimentalise female friendship and instead renders it as a dense and shifting terrain of care and control, intimacy and intrusion, making it feel at once familiar and disquieting.

The chaos of their bond is not incidental but precisely what gives it emotional and narrative charge. In a world that offers women few spaces for unmediated connection and hunger for being understood, the desire for closeness becomes overwhelming, stretching into something consuming, even destructive.

This intensity is inseparable from the broader conditions the novel inhabits — the isolating architectures of urban, neoliberal life. Both Eriko and Shoko are products of a social order that demands constant self-making while eroding the very grounds for belonging. Eriko's disciplined, hyper-managed existence and Shoko's utter disgust towards domesticity and care work, which becomes the hallmark of her blog are not opposites so much as parallel strategies of survival. Each is engaged in the labour of producing a coherent self under conditions that reward visibility but not intimacy.

Loneliness, in this sense, is not an individual failure but a structural condition, one that renders relationships fragile, instrumental, and fraught with expectation.

The novel's engagement with domesticity sharpens this critique. Through the contrasting figures of their mothers, Yuzuki exposes the uneven, often invisible labour that underwrites the making and unmaking of the "happy family."

Eriko's mother withdraws from paid work to invest entirely in her daughter's future, embodying a form of care that is both enabling and erasing. Shoko's mother, by contrast, exits the family altogether, her departure marked not by abandonment alone but by exhaustion. Together, these trajectories destabilise the ideal of domestic stability, revealing it as a fragile construct sustained by gendered sacrifice and male privilege. What appears as familial harmony is, in fact, the outcome of continuous, often unacknowledged care labour of women.

What makes Hooked particularly striking is its commitment to inhabiting the complexity of women's worlds without any apparent resolution. There are no clean moral binaries here, no easily redeemable characters. Instead, Yuzuki offers women who are contradictory, obsessive, sometimes unkind, often unknowable and thus, entirely human. Their relationships are layered with resentment, dependence, admiration, desire, and fear, refusing the neat scripts of solidarity that are often imposed upon narratives of female friendship. In doing so, the novel does not dismiss the possibility of connection but rather situates it within the messy realities of lived experience.

The novel describes a tentative connection between two lonely women in their thirties that soon spirals into an unsettling relationship. (PIC FOR REPRESENTATION)

Reading Hooked is an unsettling experience not only because it deeply humanises women, but also because it lingers in the quiet, suffocating spaces of gendered everyday life in a metropolis.

The novel suggests that under contemporary conditions, the very desire for connection can become consuming, even destructive. And yet, it is precisely this desire that renders the characters so recognisable and relatable.

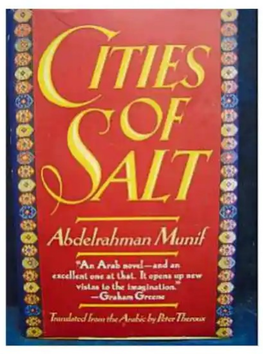
Yuzuki does not offer solutions; instead, she holds up a mirror to the often precarious intimacies that structure women's lives today. What remains is a lingering discomfort and the uneasy recognition that these worlds are not as distant as they might first appear.

THAT ONE BOOK

Grim tale of greed for black gold

Cities of Salt was banned and the author stripped of his Saudi citizenship because, as Saudha Kasim notes, the book mirrors the controversial rise of modern Saudi Arabia

When his son Fawaz mentions the presence of Arabic-speaking foreigners in Wadi al-Uyoun, Miteb al-Hathal chooses not to pay attention, thinking it's just the boy's way of once again pleading to be allowed to travel in a caravan and see the world beyond their desert oasis. However, when Fawaz says that one of them recited the Shahada at the behest of a tribal elder, Ibn Rashed, something awakens in Miteb. And when he learns that they have come to look for water, Miteb wastes no time in setting off for Ibn Rashed's encampment and questioning these foreigners himself. What he observes there transforms Miteb, turning him into the proverbial canary in the verdant oasis of Wadi al-Uyoun. How is no one else seeing what he sees: that these men from other lands with their evasive answers and strange iron tools are definitely not looking for water but something else altogether?


CITIES OF SALT
Abdelrahman Munif
"An Arab novel—and an excellent one at that. It opens up new vistas to the imagination."
—Graham Greene
Translated from the Arabic by Peter Theroux

So begins Abdelrahman Munif's landmark work of petrofiction, Cities of Salt, originally published in Arabic in 1984 and translated into English by Peter Theroux.

The novel, the first in a trilogy in English (published as a quintet of books in Arabic), traces the transformation of a traditional Arabian Gulf kingdom in the 1930s with the arrival of American oil prospectors, the conflicts that erupt between two vastly different cultures, the corrosive effects of sudden wealth and modern technology on nomadic and agrarian lives that had remained unchanged for centuries, the entrenchment of inequality, and the concentration of power among an autocratic class ill-suited to ruling a rapidly changing country. Like all Cassandras, Miteb finds his pronouncements of doom falling on deaf ears: Ibn Rashed has the support of the emir, who has permitted the Americans to carry out their exploration. Miteb is dismissed as a troublemaker.

The rest of the tribes and clans soon come to regret not supporting Miteb — they are exiled from the wadi, with the promise of new houses in another settlement that does not immediately materialise. Miteb chooses to go his own way, riding a camel into the desert.

All this happens within the first third of Cities of Salt — it's a long novel, packed with detail and unfolding at a deliberate, carefully considered pace that conjures a world that disappeared with the discovery of oil. After the exodus from Wadi al-Uyoun, we follow the lives of Fawaz and other men from the wadi until they reach the coastal settlement of Harran, which is where the bulk of the novel takes place. Here by the sea, the Americans, now acting as a commercial enterprise, are establishing their own camp and need the locals to work on the construction sites, the oil pipelines, the port and more.

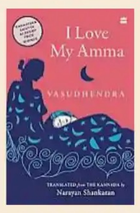
Here too, Ibn Rashed inveigles his way into the graces of the local emir, who proves to be as greedy as he is, and power plays soon unfold between various courtiers, the Americans and their Arab management, the locals who've spotted business opportunities in setting up a township for the workers and sundry other blow-ins who've heard they can make their fortune in Harran. There are deaths, there are workers' revolts, there is merciless repression: there are clear winners and losers in this grim tale of the destruction of nature and man's irrepressible thirst for petroleum.

When Cities of Salt was published, Munif, an oil economist, was stripped of his Saudi citizenship, and the book and its sequels were banned across the Gulf. It's easy to see why: the story it recounts is, in essence, that of modern Saudi Arabia, the birth of its state oil company and the foundation of cities like Dammam.

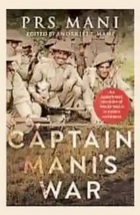
The tale is not flattering in its depiction of the venal sheikhs who sold their land and people to foreign enterprises. Rummaging around the Qatar Digital Library archives recently, I found an intelligence report sent to the colonial India office in the late 1930s, detailing Ibn Saud's complaints about a banquet arranged by the California Arabian Standard Oil Company in Dammam, where he was "compelled to chase food unsuccessfully all around the table with a spoon and fork". It's a scene that would have fit right into Cities of Salt.

That One Book *is a monthly column that does exactly what it says — it takes up one great classic and tells you why it is (still) great. The author is a writer and communications professional. She blogs at saudha.substack.com*

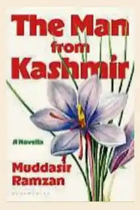
BOOKRACK



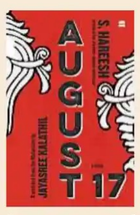
I LOVE MY AMMA
Vasudhendra
Harper, pp 256, Rs 350
First published in Kannada, this unforgettable collection of essays traces a son's journey from childhood reverence to adult understanding, when he finally sees his mother for who she truly is: flawed, stubborn, fierce and magnificently human.



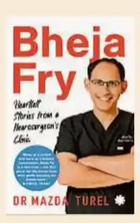
CAPTAIN MANI'S WAR
PRS Mani and Inderjeet Mani (Ed)
Juggernaut, pp 256, Rs 699
In March 1944, the Japanese invaded northeast India. There followed some of the fiercest battles of World War II. Documenting the war was an Indian journalist called PRS Mani, who had left his AIR broadcasting job to become a public relations officer for the 14th Army and subsequently the Southeast Asian Command. This is his story.



THE MAN FROM KASHMIR
Muddasir Ramzan
Bloomsbury, pp 192, Rs 499
Set in the fictional town of Poshmarg, this interconnected novella unfolds through episodic vignettes that trace the lives of a sprawling family across generations.



AUGUST 17
S Hareesh and Jayasree Kalathil (translator)
Harper, pp 432, Rs 599
Brilliant, subversive and darkly funny, this is a novel of astonishing scope and imagination from one of the most daring and original voices in contemporary Indian fiction.



BHEJA FRY
Dr Mazda Turel
Juggernaut, pp 312, Rs 499
Through some unusual cases, Dr Turel comes to understand illness not just as a medical condition, but as a test of resilience, identity and the human spirit.

The unseen theatre of the 'royal game'

Himelfarb's book takes a deep dive into the psychological warfare of chess and the personalities who make it all the more fascinating, writes Sarthak Dev

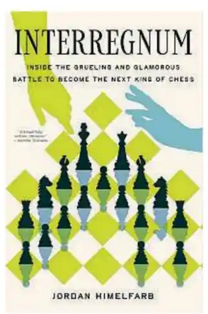
Students at a school in Chennai hold placards to congratulate D Gukesh after he became the youngest ever world chess champion in 2024. (PTI FILE PIC)

On the afternoon of December 12, 2024, the Habitat Comedy Club in Mumbai was buzzing. Three panellists with mics sat behind a table on the stage. To their right stood a giant projector screen. The audience was a group of young men and women, some in early middle age, who had gathered on a weekday afternoon to watch a chess match.

More than 4,000 miles away, in a luxury resort in Singapore, India's Gukesh Dommaraju sat across a chess table from China's Ding Liren — the defending world champion. After four hours of push and pull, a faux pas from Ding gave Gukesh a straight shot at the title.

As Ding's dazed eyes darted around the board, and as Gukesh's zoomed in on the pieces, confirming that he wasn't dreaming, the Habitat crowd let out a thunderous "YESS!". Gukesh was going to be the World Champion. The youngest ever, four years quicker to the summit than Garry Kasparov.

This scene is the final crescendo of Jordan Himelfarb's new book, Interregnum. The truest portrait of a place is found in the lives of the people who live there. Interregnum is their story. Consider how Himelfarb introduces Ding Liren, a new world champion, when the book begins. "Ding is slight and wan. Eye contact is not his forte." We learn that Ding likes to watch the rain, read poetry and philosophy. He detests leather shoes because they remind him of people with power over others. Magnus Carlsen is rendered not as a character one might know but as a force of nature one must endure. He completed fifty-piece jigsaw puzzles at two. By five, he could name the capital and population of every country on earth. Carlsen knows he's the best. During the World Cup in Baku, Carlsen asked his social media manager to draft a tweet to be posted only if he won the tournament. It read: "Chess? Completed." The book's greatest strength is its restrained use of technical jargon. Himelfarb sprinkles detail like a travel writer showing you local parlance — always in context, and just enough to build ambience.



INTERREGNUM
Jordan Himelfarb
Pegasus, pp 336, Rs 2,575

"Chess has long had a communication problem," Himelfarb told me. "It's an abstract, technical game. But it's also a beautiful, dramatic game, full of interesting characters and profound emotions. I wanted to capture all that in a way that resonated for chess fans and newcomers alike."

Chapter five dives into the most jarring loose thread within chess' fabric: the gender disparity. Thirty years after Judit Polgar breached the world top 10, drawing to a close all doubts about the ceiling for women in the sport, there exists an unmistakable institutional apathy.

"It is social residue from a previous century," Himelfarb told me. "The most important barrier to parity is a history of sexism in the sport — from derogatory comments to sexual harassment and abuse. In recent years, the chess world has finally begun to reckon with this, which is crucial. To see women at the very top of the sport requires bringing more girls to the game and encouraging them to stick with it. That begins with showing girls that the chess world is welcoming and safe."

Himelfarb pauses on India, the birthplace of chess as shatranj, the country with more grandmasters than any other, and four of the eight quarter-finalists at the 2023 Candidates tournament. He highlights the parental care with which Viswanathan Anand, an all-time great himself, has nurtured the next generation. It's hard to find a young grandmaster in India who hasn't trained with Anand, either at an academy or at his Chennai home. Take a flight to Chennai today, and as you descend, you'll see a bridge painted in the chess monochrome.

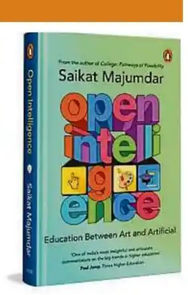
In the last scene of the book, when Gukesh lands in Chennai, soldiers escort him through a crush of cameras and screaming schoolchildren. He is showered with flower petals. A shy, 18-year-old boy from Chennai is, briefly, the centre of India's attention, a position many have only seen cricket heroes take.

We experience sport through stories. Jordan Himelfarb's Interregnum tells the world that chess produces them, too. One just needs to look.

READ OF THE WEEK

As machine intelligence rapidly transforms how we learn, work, and imagine the future, noted author and academic Saikat Majumdar presents a compelling new book, Open Intelligence: Education between Art and Artificial. This incisive and accessible work asks essential questions about the evolving relationship between education, human potential, and technological change.

In Open Intelligence, Majumdar interrogates the long-standing tensions between passion, college, and career, and explores how ideas of talent, merit, and personal growth are being redefined in an AI-driven world. Charting AI's rapid move from particular domains of Artificial Competent Intelligence (ACI) toward the possibility of a larger Artificial General Intelligence (AGI), the book considers the skills, values, and ethical frameworks that will be essential for individuals and institutions alike as machine intelligence approaches the latter. Blending storytelling with cutting-edge research, Open Intelligence offers a panoramic yet deeply grounded critique of the Indian higher education system. It highlights how AI is not only creating new opportunities but also reshaping patterns of privilege, exclusion, and social inequity. Saikat Majumdar is a novelist, columnist, scholar, and educator. He is Head of the Department of English at Ashoka University.



In defence of LEISURE

For many women, finding moments to relax and just be is an unknown concept; any idle time brings guilt and judgement. A picture project on social media capturing women at leisure shines the spotlight on the importance of doing nothing, writes Shakti Swaminathan

After tapping on each branch of the tree before hopping on to another, Ruchika finds a spot to sit but ends up letting down her hair. PHOTOS COURTESY: SURABHI YADAV FOR WOMEN AT LEISURE REPOSITORY, (@WOMEN_AT_LEISURE ON INSTAGRAM)

It's 7 am on a weekday. A woman lingers at a street corner, chai in hand, leafing through the morning newspaper and chatting with other women. It feels hard to imagine, doesn't it? Now replace her with a man — it suddenly seems ordinary. In this imagined moment, is the woman neglecting her responsibilities or simply taking time for herself?

In a famous 1950s marketing study by psychologist Mason Haire, housewives rejected instant coffee because it symbolised laziness and a failure to care for their families, despite its convenience. A little over a decade ago, an MLA from Indore, Usha Thakur, had remarked that "new generation mothers are lazy, hence feed their children Maggi". And then, there's the story of lazy Susan. Although the origin story of the lazy Susan is muddled, the inventor of the convenient turntable may have simply wanted to avoid the drudgery of serving guests — yet the name lazy Susan stuck. Women, across time, have been tagged lazy for taking shortcuts, saving time, or even taking a moment for themselves.

When leisure invites scorn

Labour is measured in economic terms, and since homemakers don't leave their homes, their caregiving and household work remains invisible, unquantifiable, unpaid, underappreciated but unceasing. For many women, finding guilt-free time to do nothing is an alien concept, and idleness is equated with worthlessness. In a patriarchal system, this belief is ingrained through years of conditioning. So women keep working, constantly.

Leisure, defined as a time when one drops their guard and is at ease, is also a measure of how free a society is. It is shaped by class, caste, geography, and gender. For many men, being idle is a choice — a right earned as breadwinners or future providers. For women, especially homemakers, it is often treated as an accusation. Advertising reinforces this, portraying hyperactive mothers who wake before dawn, look immaculate, and enthusiastically juggle spotless uniforms and perfectly nutritious meals.

A group of women in the village of Sukkhad in Himachal Pradesh celebrate a festival by singing and dancing together until midnight.

Women in Khargone (Madhya Pradesh) enjoying an ice cream break on a summer afternoon.

Basanti: Exploration of leisure

Surabhi Yadav's Basanti: Women at Leisure project on Instagram challenges this narrative. Through her photographs, she captures women in carefree moments-hanging upside down from trees, enjoying ice lollies or just taking a nap.

Through her work, Surabhi observed that collective spaces are crucial for women to experience leisure without guilt. In rural India, such spaces often emerge during weddings and religious gatherings. Women gain rare opportunities to travel, sing, dance, and bond with friends. In Surabhi's hometown in Bundelkhand, women are not allowed in wedding baraats. Instead, they subvert norms by dressing as men, ghoonghat intact and playfully beating the men in the house with sticks.

Yet in urban spaces, safety concerns and social judgement limit women to the home — balconies, terraces, watching television, and the oft-trivialised 'kitty parties'. "Urban spaces are capitalistic and recreation is measured in terms of productivity," she adds. Even leisure activities like dance classes are tracked through calories and steps, turning rest into labour.

Grandmothers and leisure

Author Sowmya Rajendran's recent picture book, 'My Ammama is Now a Cat', offers a different lens on rest. It is inspired by her grandmother, Lakshmy Kutti, and tells the story of a young girl who notices her grandmother behaving like a cat — sleeping often, watching birds, even seeming to grow whiskers. Ammamma embraces this identity, declaring herself a cat. Beneath its whimsy lies a deeper commentary on rest. "My grandmother was different because she was unapologetic about needing rest. Her instinct for self-preservation was always part of her personality and she protected it more as she grew older," says Sowmya, recalling how other women called her grandmother "lazy", yet she remained unfazed, laughing it off while continuing her rituals — like applying generous amounts of 'snow' to her face. "Her life wasn't easy, but she never lost the zeal for it. She advised her daughters to take a nap and all her granddaughters to marry some white dude and escape the drudgery of marriage in India," laughs Sowmya.

Surabhi relaxing at a picnic with friends.

Sowmya Rajendran. PIC CREDIT: JAEE JADHAV

Surabhi Yadav.

Surabhi's work often elicits emotional responses. Women approach her after public talks, hugging her or shaking her hand silently, grateful for the validation. For men, her work is often a revelation. Many ask how they can help, having never considered what leisure looks like for the women in their lives. Sowmya echoes this observation: "When growing up, I was surrounded by women who were always working. Even when we were guests at other people's homes, the women were expected to go to the kitchen and help out. As is common in a patriarchal system, it was mostly women who imposed these expectations on other women. The men were completely uninterested because they could afford to be so."

After taking care of her one-year-old niece and completing her chores, Rinki finally finds some time to work on her eyebrows during Covid-19 lockdown.

Popular culture reflects these realities too. In the Tamil film, 'Thaai Kizhavi' (Godmother), three middle-aged sons discover that their elderly mother has been secretly travelling to Madurai every weekend. Assuming she has been buying gold for the family, they are shocked when she reveals she has simply been wandering the city, eating sweets, watching movies, and dining alone. Her unapologetic joy resonated widely — with a mother who once wished for Covid-19 so she could "rest, alone in quarantine" and another who longs for "me-time" while caring for ailing in-laws

But has anything changed for younger women? Surabhi, who also runs the NGO Sajhe Sapne, believes progress is uneven. "The younger women from north and central India visually know what they want, but structurally nothing has changed."

To see and understand

At her storytelling sessions, Sowmya begins by asking children about their grandparents — their likes and dislikes. She says, "It is amazing how little children know about their grandparents beyond being this person at home who gives them food or is always watching TV!" This exercise encourages children to see grandparents as individuals with histories and desires. "Most children are still growing up in homes where it is the women who do the bulk of the housework. Since the book specifically draws attention to women's labour, they become aware of how much doing is involved in the running of a home."

Surabhi reflects on her own family. "My father would tease my mother about her wanting a wristwatch, but never got her one," she says.

Why would a woman need a watch when she doesn't go to work? People would argue.

Perhaps the question is not about timekeeping, but about time itself — \who owns it, who deserves it, and who is denied it.

Travel

Best foot forward: A day in Prague

Deepali Dhingra puts on her walking shoes and explores the largest city of Czechia, taking in its many churches, gardens, and bridges across River Vltava

"Don't forget to pack your walking shoes," a well-intentioned friend said when she heard I was going to Prague. There could not have been better advice, because the capital and the largest city of Czechia is best explored on foot. Its labyrinthine cobbled streets and pub-lined pavements are an invitation to put on a pair of comfortable shoes and explore its many splendid towers, over 200 gardens and historic architecture.

It is no wonder then, that my first thought as soon as I settled in my hotel which was just a few steps away from the iconic Prague Castle, was to set off to explore one of Europe's finest cities. The uneven, rhythmically bumpy cobblestones seemed to echo the city's medieval heartbeat under my soles.

Even before I could turn the corner, the Baroque grandeur of the St Nicholas Bell Tower came into view, looming large above the buildings in the vicinity, a stone guardian. Built in the 18th century by the Jesuits, the striking structure served as a lookout point to detect any fires in the city.

Walking up the winding wooden staircase, I felt as if I had stepped into the past, as I peeped into the well-preserved flat of the tower warden. Another flight of stairs and I came face to face with the magnificent St Nicholas bell — the only surviving bell of four from the demolished Gothic St Nicholas Church. But it was from the viewing gallery, perched 65 meters high and which I reached after climbing 215 steps, that I was rewarded with the most stunning view of the city. From that far up, I could also spot some important landmarks such as Kaiserstein Palace, National Theatre, Old Town Hall and The Black Tower.

The clear blue skies dotted with clouds pointed to a beautiful day, persuading me to continue exploring the city and soon, I found myself walking towards Charles Bridge. Souvenir shops beckoned with their wares. The caramelised scent of cinnamon and toasted sugar drifted from a doorway, luring me inside for a Trdelník — a warm, hollow pastry brimming with whipped cream and tart strawberries.

Astronomical Clock at the Old Town Hall.

Bridge across the river

Built over River Vltava, Charles Bridge is a medieval stone bridge that connects the Lesser Town to Old Town and adjacent areas. Built by King Charles IV in the early 15th century, the historic bridge attracts thousands of tourists for the panoramic views and in recent times, has also become a favourite place for couples to propose to each other.

Walking across the bridge, I paused to watch caricature artists skillfully capturing the likenesses of eager tourists for a few Czech Korunas. Stopping by, I was drawn to the sight of the ferries taking tourists for a ride across the river below. Another attraction at the bridge is a number of statues, with the sculpture of John of Nepomuk considered the most important and photographed. Local legend claims that touching the statue and making a wish ensures its fulfilment. Following in the footsteps of countless dreamers before me, I rested my hand on the cool metal, whispered a small prayer, and made a wish of my own.

One step at a time

With every step revealing something new, I continued walking down the bridge towards the Old Town Square with its narrow, winding paths. Many of its streets being pedestrian-only zones, I could focus wholeheartedly on the historic architecture and scenic charm of the city.

Just a short walk away, I reached one of the most visited monuments in all of Prague — the Old Town Hall with the Astronomical Clock, which is the oldest astronomical clock in the world built in 1410. From the viewing gallery, I looked down on the Old Town Square teeming with people enjoying the sunny day and the panoramic view of the city that lay before me. As the sun began to dip behind the spires of the Prague Castle, casting a golden glow over the Vltava, I looked down at my feet. They were tired, certainly, but they had carried me through centuries of history in a single afternoon.

A panoramic view of the city from St Nicholas Bell Tower. PHOTOS BY AUTHOR

For travellers who are familiar with the wine routes of countries like France and Spain, a visit to a dedicated museum that charts the story of Armenia's wine culture comes as a revelation, writes Veidehi Gite

The facade of the Wine History Museum.

From grape to goblet

The road to Sasunik felt cinematic — dust rising behind my car, the Armenian highlands stretching wide and timeless. Then, almost theatrically, terracotta-hued walls and vineyards rippled into the distance. The facade of building that houses the museum was sleek and contemporary on the outside, but I didn't expect its real story to unfold underground. Armenia's first dedicated Wine History Museum was an eight-metre descent into volcanic rock that soon doubled as 8,000 years of winemaking history.

As I stepped into the cool, dimly lit space with my guide, Siran Dashyan, she said, "This cave-like atmosphere isn't an aesthetic choice. The natural climate control here is perfect for both wine storage and artefact preservation." Down below, the mood shifts. Soft lighting, stone walls, and glass cases filled with fragments of civilisations.

Proof of wine culture

I stop first at a tiny, unassuming exhibit: a charred grape seed from Aratashen, dating back to 4100 BC. It is one of the oldest physical proofs of wine culture in the world — small enough to miss, powerful enough to reset history. Nearby stood a massive burial jar from the first century BC.

"Wine travelled with people even into the afterlife," Siran told me. "It was a final companion — a provision for the journey beyond." In just those two objects, I saw wine move from agriculture to ritual, from daily life to eternity. A zoomorphic vase from the 1st century AD hints at wine's sacred status in ancient Armenia, and 1653 Sevanavank Monastery Khachkar carved by Master Trdat, depicts paradise (vineyard) with hanging grape clusters as Christ is "the true vine," and wine/grapes point to the Eucharist wine as Christ's blood. In another corner, a wineskin flask from Oshakan shows how wine once travelled with merchants across deserts and mountains, and a 4000-year-old silver goblet from Karashamb, of celebrations where drinking was an act worthy of precious metal.

Gold crown, first to third BC, Artashat in Armenia. PHOTOS BY AUTHOR

An exhibit depicting the Biblical symbolism of wine.

Story of continuity

Even medieval manuscripts make an appearance, tracing how Armenian physicians once prescribed wine as medicine.

That sense of continuity followed me back into daylight as we walked through the production spaces of the family owned wine company in Armenia. "We are the largest winemaking company in the country," Siran said. "But growth here comes with responsibility — to nature, to tradition, and to what we pass on." It's a philosophy that shows in what they pour. Areni and Kangun, Armenia's indigenous grapes are finally stepping into the global spotlight after centuries of being overlooked. The story of Areni feels especially poetic. In 2011, archaeologist Boris Gasparyan and his team uncovered the world's oldest known winery at Armenia's Areni-1 caves, from 4100 BC.

For centuries after, Armenian monks carried that same winemaking tradition into medieval monasteries, turning wine into both ritual and resistance.

In the modern tasting lounge, I sampled an Areni red and the Yerevan 782 BC sparkling brut — crisp, confident, and quietly distinctive. "Armenia is about continuity," Siran said as she poured. "And it's this thread connects the first fermented grape to the glass in your hand." Dinner reinforced her point, when a spread of local Armenian cheeses, beef loin with arishta — the country's beloved handmade pasta and tender chicken with peppers arrived alongside more wine.

For travellers like me, familiar with the wine routes of France or Spain, Armenia offered something refreshingly different. Not just new flavours, but a deeper narrative, where I found wine to be inseparable from trade, medicine, and memory.

From Ladakh's yak milk churpi to Kashmir's bloomy-rind wheels, India's artisanal cheeses are gaining attention. Global techniques are being employed to local milk, climate patterns, and culture, ensuring that cheeses are rooted and unique, discovers Neeta Lal

India's big CHEESE moment

When India recently walked away with four medals at the Mundial do Queijo do Brasil 2026—a prestigious global competition in Brazil that brings together cheesemakers and dairy experts from across continents to judge cheeses on flavour, texture, technique and terroir—it wasn't just a win for a handful of producers.

India's haul, including a Super Gold for Eleftheria Gulmarg's delicate, brie-style wheel, marked its debut on a world stage dominated by European cheeses. More importantly, it marked a deeper shift in India's culinary identity, one that chefs across the country have been nurturing: a move toward hyperlocal, artisanal cheeses that speak of terroir, season, and skill.

Focus on indigenous

For decades, India's fine-dining kitchens leaned heavily on imported cheeses—Parmesan shaved over pastas, French brie on cheese boards, burrata flown in for salads. But that reliance is changing fast. Today, chefs are turning to the high-altitude dairies of Ladakh, the lush pastures of Kashmir, and experimental creameries across the country incorporating their produce into menus that celebrate Indian landscapes.

At the forefront of this shift is Prateek Sadhu, whose cooking has long drawn from the Himalayan belt at his restaurant Naar in Himachal. "The beauty of these cheeses lies in their honesty," he says. "A yak milk churpi from Ladakh or a brie-style from Kashmir carries the story of altitude, pasture, and the hands that made it. Why would I replace that with something flown halfway across the world?"

Chef Prateek Sadhu.

Working closely with small producers, Sadhu adapts dishes around what is seasonally available rather than demanding consistency. So, a soft, smoky churpi might find its way into broths or be paired with foraged greens, its subtle tang anchoring the dish. It's a far cry from the predictable cheese courses of yore.

Dishes crafted from Himalayan cheeses are paired with foraged herbs and leaves at the Himachal restaurant, Naar. PICS COURTESY: NAAR

This philosophy resonates with Garima Arora—the first Indian woman chef to earn two Michelin stars—whose cooking has always reinterpreted Indian ingredients through a contemporary lens. "For a long time, we believed that quality cheese had to come from Europe," she notes. "But what's happening now is a re-education of both chefs and diners.Indian cheeses are no longer substitutes—they are stars in their own right."

Chef Garima Arora.

Arora points to the diversity emerging within the category itself: creamy, bloomy-rind cheeses from Kashmir; nutty, caramelised brunost-style experiments; and the evolving textures of churpi, from rock-hard chewables to delicate, spreadable forms. "It opens up a new vocabulary for Indian cuisine," she says. "You can create dishes that are globally relevant but deeply local."

Few have championed this local-first approach as consistently as Aditi Dugar, founder of the farm-to-table restaurant Masque. For Dugar, the rise of artisanal cheese is part of a larger ecosystem shift. "We've always believed in working directly with producers—whether it's farmers, foragers, or cheesemakers," she says.

At Masque, cheese boards now tell an Indian story: wheels from Kashmir, experiments from small urban creameries, and collaborations that evolve with each season. "It's also about storytelling," Dugar adds. "When guests hear about the people behind the cheese—their challenges, craft—it changes how they taste it."

That connection between producer and plate has been critical in reshaping supply chains. Cheesemakers like Mumbai-based Mausam Narang of Eleftheria and Ladakh-based producers such as Thenlay Nurboo are no longer niche suppliers but key collaborators in a growing movement. Their success at global platforms like the Brazil competition has only accelerated demand, pushing chefs to move toward collaboration.

Global wins, local pride

For many, this moment feels like a long time coming. Indian dairy traditions are ancient and varied, from the smoked cheeses of the Northeast to the fermented milk products of the Himalayas. What's new is the refinement—the application of global techniques to local milk, climates, and cultures, resulting in cheeses that are rooted and revered.

There are challenges, of course. Seasonality can make supply inconsistent; logistics from remote regions remain complex; and pricing can be higher than mass-produced imports. However, chefs see these not as obstacles but as opportunities. "It forces creativity," says Sadhu. "You cook with what you have, when you have it. That's how cuisine evolves."

Aditi Dugar.

The ripple effects are visible. Diners are becoming more curious, more willing to try unfamiliar names and flavours. There's also a growing sense of pride. When Prime Minister Narendra Modi lauded India's wins at the Brazil competition, it underscored how far the movement has come—from niche farmers' markets to international glory.

THE GREEN THEORY

No-cook menus for no-fuel days

RANJINI RAO

As I chatted with a restaurateur friend the other day over some lemon tea, she shared her anxiety about the LPG crisis. "Our chefs are working on some no-heat menu ideas; they've got some cold soup trials next week, let's see how that turns out." She's clearly not alone in feeling anxious about this. So many people in my circle have brought it up in conversation.

While looking for recipes that require no heat, I thought it was the right time to dig up some nuggets, all from my inherited wisdom kit, about how to slow down and heed the season and the inner temperature, as it were, when we're feeling stressed or burnt out. This is also linked to building a regenerative mindset in matters of food, and understanding where we stand in the system we belong to: how relationships and inheritances shape us, and how all this informs how we live: how we eat, think, act.

My mom often used metaphors when she wanted to highlight important life lessons. It didn't matter how bitter the experience, she always offered something bitter as an antidote. A fall in the playground resulting in a bruised knee, the betrayal of a friend, the loss of a prized possession...they all fell in the "needle for a thorn" category.

Her therapy was wide-ranging—culled from a secret stash of simple, everyday recipes that she turned to, and with a twist, they'd be primed to suit any situation. There was bitter lemon pickle and a bittersweet kashaya, and lemon peel chutney, among others, ready to make us squirm, and eventually calm down, as they soothed taste buds, the gut, and the mind. None of these call for any stove-top cooking. With the summer upon us, there are enough recipes that require no heat, to help us conserve energy in all forms. Here's one such meal:

Masala puffed rice with masala raita and lemon thokku

- Puffed rice (serves 2):
- 2-3 cups puffed rice
- 1 carrot, peeled and grated
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 2 tomatoes, chopped
- ¼ cup freshly grated coconut
- Coriander leaves, chopped
- 2 teaspoons rasam powder
- Salt according to preference
- 1 teaspoon sugar (optional)
- A pinch of hing
- 1-2 tablespoons salted, roasted peanuts
- 1 big lemon, halved

Masala raita:

Grind a quarter cup of freshly grated coconut, half a teaspoon of mustard seeds, a green chilli, a dash of hing and a handful of coriander leaves, and make a paste. Then, make a raita with the ground paste, thinly cut cucumber, salt and a cup of thick curd.

Puffed rice makes for a good snack.

Lemon thokku:

De-seed and pour boiling hot water on a couple of lemon rinds, chillies (three or four), and quarter-inch ginger and let this sit for 20-30 minutes. Cool and grind it to a paste. In a clean and dry bottle, add the rest of the ingredients—a couple of fresh lemons that have been washed, dried, de-seeded and chopped up fine, two tablespoons of groundnut oil, a dash of asafoetida, quarter spoon of turmeric, two teaspoons of roasted fenugreek seed powder, a teaspoon of red chilli powder, salt and sugar as per your preference.

Lemon thokku.

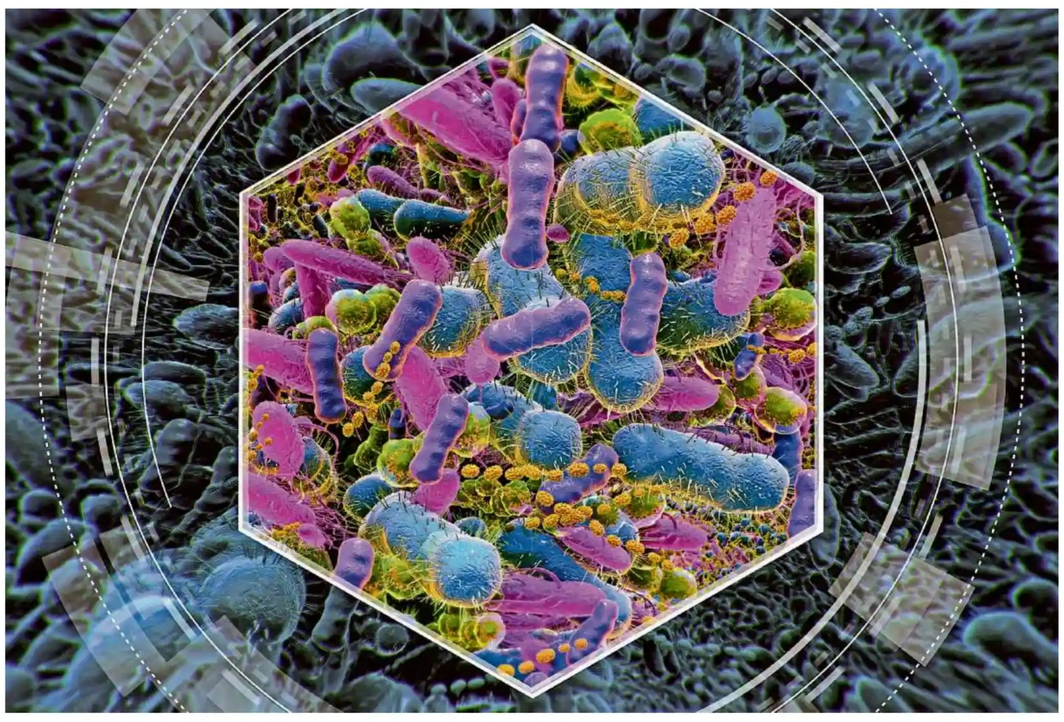
Mix well, add the paste slowly, and shake the bottle to mix again. Refrigerate and use in ten days.

(Ranjini is a communications professor, author, and podcaster, straddling many other worlds, in Bengaluru. She's passionate about urban farming and sustainable living, and can mostly be found cooking and baking in her little kitchen, where, surrounded by heirloom coffee kettles and mismatched tea cups, she finds her chi.)

Wellness

The gut is home to a wide variety of bacteria that impact how food is digested and nutrients are used in the body. Any variation in the gut ecosystem also impacts weight and blood sugar levels. Lifestyle changes, timely treatment, and surgical interventions in specific cases are vital, writes Dr Ashish Gautam

GUT INSTINCT


The gut microbiome is home to a diverse and large community of microorganisms.

People often talk about obesity and diabetes together, but gut health sits at the centre of both. The gut shapes how the body breaks down food, stores fat, and regulates blood sugar. When it falls out of balance, weight increases and blood sugar becomes harder to control.

The gut is home to a large community of bacteria that affect how food is broken down and how energy is used. These organisms change how the body absorbs nutrients and responds to insulin. When their balance shifts, the body begins storing more fat, and insulin stops working as well. Low-grade inflammation begins to develop. This is the work of the gut microbiome—trillions of microorganisms in the intestine that function like a metabolic organ. In people with obesity, there is reduced microbial diversity, a higher ratio of firmicutes to bacteroidetes, and a rise in opportunistic species. This matters because some gut bacteria extract more calories from the same food. They break down fibre and other hard-to-digest carbohydrates to produce short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs) such as acetate, propionate, and butyrate.

These increase energy availability and can lead the liver to produce more fat. Over time, this results not just in weight gain, but in metabolic changes that are harder to reverse.

How eating habits affect gut balance

Processed foods, refined carbohydrates, and added sugars reduce the diversity of gut bacteria. Low fibre intake weakens the bacteria that support digestion and metabolic regulation. The body then handles calories less efficiently and stores more than it should. Hunger signals grow unreliable and intake rises without any real sense of fullness.

Gut bacteria regulate appetite through hormones. They stimulate GLP-1 (glucagon-like peptide-1) and PYY (peptide YY), which signal fullness, while suppressing ghrelin, which drives hunger. When these bacteria are out of balance, satiety weakens and people eat more, often without realising it.

The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World report from 2024 found that 55 per cent of Indians cannot afford a healthy diet. Foods high in fat, salt, and sugar are cheap and widely available. Poor diet quality combined with excess calories keeps disrupting gut function across large sections of the population.

What the gut does to blood sugar

The gut produces hormones that regulate insulin and blood sugar. When those signals are disturbed, glucose control suffers. Chronic inflammation makes it worse by driving insulin resistance over time, a direct path to type 2 diabetes.

Much of this inflammation begins with what is known as a leaky gut. When the intestinal barrier weakens, lipopolysaccharides (LPS), toxic components from bacterial cell walls, pass into the bloodstream and trigger a persistent, low-grade inflammatory response. This LPS translocation is a key driver of insulin resistance and metabolic syndrome.

The rise in type 2 diabetes, including among younger adults, closely follows this pattern. Abdominal obesity, disrupted gut function, and insulin resistance tend to develop together.

Beyond inflammation, gut bacteria also influence metabolism through signaling receptors. SCFAs activate G-protein-coupled receptors GPR41 and GPR43, and modulate AMPK, an enzyme that governs the balance between fat oxidation and fat storage.

When this signaling is disrupted, the body shifts further toward storing rather than burning energy.

When lifestyle changes aren't enough

Making changes to your lifestyle is a good place to start, but they don't always work on their own. For individuals who persist in their struggles despite sustained effort, medical interventions become pertinent. When a person's BMI is over 29 and they have diabetes or high blood pressure, or over 35 regardless of other conditions, bariatric surgery is a medically accepted option. These surgeries make the stomach smaller and change the hormonal signals that control hunger and how the body responds to insulin.

Laparoscopic and robotic-assisted techniques have made these surgeries more accurate, cut down on recovery time, and cut down on complications. Changes in gut microbes after surgery are increasingly linked to better blood sugar control and improved metabolism.

There are many ways that gut health, obesity, and diabetes are connected. Treating any one of them alone or separately usually partial results.

Food, exercise, sleep, and medical care all need to work together for one's overall health.

(The author is principal director, robotic and laparoscopic surgery at a Delhi hospital.)

Fat stored around the abdomen behaves differently from fat elsewhere. It releases compounds that worsen inflammation and insulin resistance. Two people with the same BMI can have very different levels of metabolic risk. Waist circumference and other metabolic markers often give a clearer picture. ICMR data from 2023 shows that many adults now carry excess abdominal fat, which is closely linked to diabetes and related metabolic changes.

The gut also influences where fat is stored. Gut microbiota suppress fasting-induced adipose factor (FIAF), a protein that normally limits lipoprotein lipase (LPL) activity. When FIAF is reduced, LPL activity rises, leading the body to store more fat in adipose tissue instead of using it for energy.

BIOHACK OF THE WEEK

Nurture your good microbes!

What steps can you take to support your gut health? One way is to ensure that your diet has enough fibre content. Fibre lowers inflammation and boosts a variety of microbes associated with digestion. Include leafy green vegetables, seeds and nuts, apart from tofu in your diet, along with a variety of whole grains.

Food variety is very important, when it comes to gut health. Eating fermented foods like yoghurt or kimchi ensures there is enough probiotic in your diet. Add fruits and vegetables that have adequate polyphenols – micronutrients in plants – typically colourful foods, for example, red lettuce or berries.

While you increase your fibre intake, make sure you also drink plenty of water. Limit or eliminate your consumption of sugary drinks and juices, as they can aid growth of harmful bacteria.

Is coffee good for gut health? While the jury is out on that one, a recent study by researchers at the University College Cork, Ireland says that coffee, whether decaffeinated or caffeinated, can make a positive impact on the gut microbiome, and also a person's mood and stress levels. The study, published in 'Nature Communications', (April, 2026), notes that coffee increases stomach acidity and stimulates the release of hormones that aid digestion.

Getting enough sleep and regular exercise also enhance your gut health. The wellbeing of your gut is strongly linked to your mental health as well. Long-term stress impacts the gut-brain axis, so it helps to introduce meditation and breathing techniques into your routine.

There is no one-size-fits-all formula for gut health because the gut microbiome is complex and unique to every individual. It is best to seek medical advice. Avoid gut cleanse products or programmes that have not been evolved through consistent studies. There are no quick fixes to boost gut health. Also, steer clear of 'super-food' related messaging.

Curated by Savitha Karthik

*(**Biohack of the Week** offers actionable tips to optimise your wellbeing.)*

EYE ON DESIGN

Contemporary designers are marking a shift in design thinking by creating pieces with unfixed forms as part of a larger slow-life philosophy, writes Sowmya Putran

Siona lounge chair and hugger.
(PIC COURTESY: KOSH)

In the middle of becoming

A chair that looks like it paused while folding into itself. A table that looks like it is about to shift. A surface that feels like a landscape caught halfway through forming. Across a new set of contemporary furniture, form is no longer fixed. It appears to hover in transition, as if caught in the middle of becoming something else.

This approach marks a shift in design thinking. Furniture is shaped for use and for the moments it holds. These pieces slow you down, pulling your attention as much as they serve a function.

Balletic coffee table. (PICS COURTESY: DESIGN NI DUKAAN)

Frozen landscape

The making follows the material. The slab is first studied for its internal lines and direction. Cutting and shaping respond to this rather than override it.

At Ravoh, a handmade furniture and design collaboration co-founded by Somya Vohra, the focus is on stone. Here, the material is approached like terrain, with its internal patterns guiding how the piece takes shape.

"Stone doesn't give you second chances. Once you cut, you commit," Vohra notes. The process calls for accuracy, but also knowing when to stop. Every part that is refined and what is left untouched shapes how the object is read.

In the Picasso dining table, the surface looks like a piece of landscape caught mid-change. Veining moves across it like currents, hinting at water or geological shifts. "For us, it started with moving away from the idea of the table as a fixed form," shares Vohra.

The design works with what's already in the slab. The veining sets the direction, and the changes stay minimal. The surface holds a sense of movement because it isn't overpolished. The base is kept simple and secondary, so the top gets the spotlight.

Mid-gesture

The tactile approach continues at Kosh, a sculptural furniture practice co-founded by Nidhi Gupta. The pieces feel mid-gesture, as though they are still arriving at their final state. The Aven Totem is a shelving system, but reads as something more sculptural. Staggered shelves jut out from a central spine in uneven spacing, each offset like a moment paused mid-rotation. The mix of metal, wood, and marble adds variation in textures.

Divalent side table

That idea of incompletion continues in the Solene centre table. It carries an irregular marble top without a clear edge. The surface has natural variations with a mottled finish in muted tones that mimic cosmic textures without depicting anything specifically. "It is meant to be read as a fragment of a larger form rather than a complete object," says Gupta. The tabletop rests on three supports. Here, asymmetry is used as a structured imbalance that still holds steady.

A similar tension appears in the Siona lounge chair. It has a bean-like extension that curves into the main chair, wrapping around it. The gesture suggests a hug, but stops short of closing. A deep red back cushion symbolises an upturned heart, creating a visual centre. Soft contours keep it from becoming rigid. That concept of softness continues in the accompanying side table, formed by two maroon-toned inverted hemispheres that do not quite line up. One is nudged off-centre, so the form looks imbalanced and in tension, even though it is structurally stable. A stone inlay on top brings contrast.

Still in motion

At Design Ni Dukaan, a multidisciplinary design studio founded by Veeram Shah, the tension between movement and stillness is central. The studio's table designs draw from fluid and soft forms. Yet these are made with hard materials like stone and metal. It is through this contrast that Shah achieves the final look.

Balletic takes its cue from dance. Mild steel, typically associated with rigidity, is shaped to feel pliable.

The process begins in clay, so the form is shaped freely, before being built in metal through multiple welded parts. These are refined into a continuous surface. The final piece reads like a movement held in suspension, with parts opening outward while a central core anchors it.

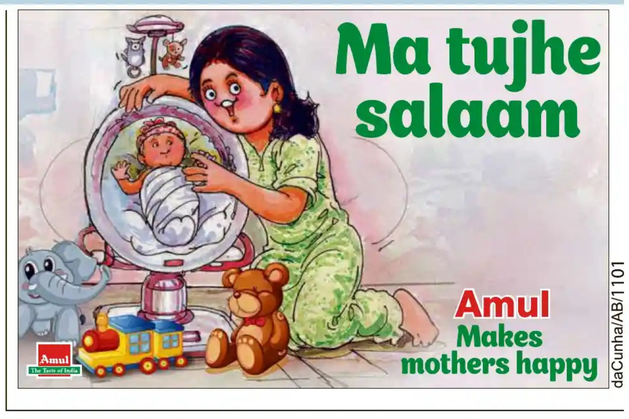
That sense of movement held in check carries into Divalent. Rounded forms come close to touching but don't. A larger central piece is paired with a slimmer extension, with brass details adding contrast. It feels steady, but like it could shift with a small change.

The same push between order and movement appears in Deconstruction. A simple grid first fixes the layout, with columns and a flat surface. Into this, curved elements are introduced, cutting through the linear system and opening it up. Brass supports hold a glass top, while trays and a wooden box sit within the frame. These elements can be moved, letting the composition shift its arrangement.

Across these practices, furniture moves beyond utility into something more open-ended. Nothing feels fully resolved, and that's the point. The forms hold a slight tension, like they could still shift, but choose not to.

Picasso dining table. PIC COURTESY: RAVOH

White Peacock by Abanindranath Tagore.
PIC COURTESY: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



An intimate gathering that RESHAPED THE WORLD OF ART

Giridhar Khasnis recalls an unusual experiment that was born about 111 years ago in a verandah in Jorasanko, in the heart of Kolkata

On 12 July 1915, in the south veranda of their Jorasanko residence in Calcutta (now Kolkata), the three Tagore brothers — Abanindranath Tagore, Gaganendranath Tagore and Samrendranath Tagore (nephews of Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore) — initiated a unique artist-led experiment.

Inaugurated by Gurudev Rabindranath (1861–1941), the Bichitra Club — or the "model school," as he initially described it — drew most of its early students from the extended Tagore family.

Beyond formal classes in drawing and music, Bichitra evolved into a vibrant polymathic space where art, craft, literature, music, and conversation flowed into one another. A library, built from books lent by members of the Tagore family, grew to house over 7,000 volumes. In addition to fine art, the club encouraged members to collect and study handmade objects such as needlework, pottery, and items made of bamboo and cane from villages. In doing so, Bichitra blurred the line between fine art and craft, treating both with equal respect.

Abanindranath Tagore, a leading figure of the Bengal School of Art, served as the first teacher, while Gaganendranath Tagore took on the role of director. They were supported by an impressive group of artists and teachers, including Nandalal Bose, Surendranath Kar, Mukul Chandra Dey and Asit Kumar Haldar. Together, they fostered an environment that encouraged experimentation and innovation rather than imitation. Although Abanindranath was officially associated with the Government School of Art, he remained deeply committed to strengthening Bichitra, particularly in evolving printmaking techniques.

DIFFERENT STROKES

Enlivened by discussions, performances and cultural gatherings, the club soon became a vital intellectual hub of the city's artistic landscape.

Among those who experienced this environment firsthand was Pratima Devi (1893–1969), Rabindranath's daughter-in-law.

"Bichitra attained tremendous eminence in those times," she later recalled. "There were opportunities for literary cultivation, art education, and varied discussions at Bichitra. The sons and daughters of friends and acquaintances joined us, too. During this time, Abanindranath appointed his student Nandalal Babu as the art teacher. Gurudev had hoped to experiment with his self-created teaching methods and strategies here."

Japanese connection

The years between 1917 and 1918 marked Bichitra's most vibrant phase. Its activities intensified, collaborations deepened, and discussions grew richer.

A transformative moment arrived in December 1916 with the visit of Japanese artist Kampo Arai (1878–1945). Sent by the Japan Painting Association to study and replicate the Ajanta murals, Arai was invited by Rabindranath to teach at Bichitra.

Arai's presence was catalytic. At a time when the club was already nurturing new ideas, Arai introduced artists to new pictorial possibilities drawn from Japanese techniques and aesthetics. His special emphasis on the discipline of brushwork, the importance of line, a sensitivity to tonal variation, and the significance of space had an immediate impact. His interactions encouraged artists to look beyond prevailing idioms and explore a balance between technical discipline and creative spontaneity. While expounding Japanese-style approaches and techniques, Arai formed close relationships with leading figures of the Neo-Bengal school.

At the same time, Arai immersed himself in Indian artistic traditions. He travelled extensively across the country, studying painting practices in Buddhist temples and caves, and documenting India's people, landscapes, and cultural life. His masterful tracings of the Ajanta murals — rendered on fine Japanese paper — were sent to Tokyo Imperial University.

Arai, who had developed a deep affection for Rabindranath, regarded him as a true sage. The respect was mutual. When Arai, after his 18-month stay in India, was preparing to return to Japan in May 1918, Rabindranath presented him with a poem in Bengali calligraphy. It said: *Dear friend,/One day you came to my room/as if you were a guest./Today at your departure/you came into my intimate soul.*

Arai's diary from that period in India, alongside approximately 870 items (including sketches, watercolours, and illustrated postcards), has since been digitised and made available to the public by the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, offering a permanent record of this cross-cultural dialogue.

Bichitra's life as an independent entity was relatively brief. In 1921, Rabindranath founded Visva-Bharati at Santiniketan. The following year, the Bichitra Club — renamed the 'Bichitra Studio for Artists of the Neo-Bengal School'— was relocated there. This studio eventually evolved into what is now known as Silpa-Sadana, a centre dedicated to rural crafts and industries.

The story of the Bichitra Club demonstrates how intimate, informal yet purposeful spaces that value creativity, nurture curiosity, and encourage interdisciplinary learning possess the quiet power to reshape the wider world of art and education. What began as a veranda experiment grew into a living idea — shaping the way art is taught, practised, imagined, and, above all, woven into life.

ON THE PALETTE

Gardens where memories sing

An artist shaped by two cultures, Maya Burman builds intimate, rhythmic worlds that fuse architecture and nature, writes Shilpi Madan about her latest solo exhibition

Artist Maya Burman brings her architectural training to the layered patterns, curious rhythms, and soothing watercolours of her work. In her latest solo exhibition, Gardens of Song, at Art Musings in Mumbai, she telescopes the past seven years of her evolving relationship with art.

The daughter of renowned French artist Maïté Delteil and legendary Indian artist Sakti Burman, Maya inhabits an ecosystem shaped by painting and poetry, moving fluidly between cultures. Trained as an architect at the École Nationale d'Architecture Paris-Villemin, she developed a deeper connection with Indian sensibilities during a formative year at the Centre for Built Environment in Kolkata, where she worked on a survey of North Kolkata's historic residential quarters linked to the Bengal Renaissance.

Maya Burman.

"Being from two different cultures made me inherently curious. I had the possibility of exploring two universes and creating my own blend," says Maya. "My artistic background has helped me develop an eye for both Indian and European artistic identities. I've been fortunate to have had a smooth journey into art."

Her use of black ink traces back to her architectural training. "At the time, we used to draw with a rotary pen. I still do. Even the composition of my work is constructed stone by stone. It's almost like building a house, achieving a delicate balance between empty and full spaces." What intrigues her is everyday life — simple feelings, small joys: dancing, playing, gardening, sleeping.

A lilting harmony runs through the works, justifying the title Gardens of Song. Floral patterns on dresses, rhythmic limbs, lush fruits, fluttering flowers, little boats, playful motifs, and split ruby-like pomegranates recur. Watery blues, canary yellows, rose reds, and terracotta hues create a vibrant visual playground.

One of the artworks on display, 'Cabinet of Curiosities' by Maya Burman, 2025.

"My favourites are the portraits of my vegetables. I call them my babies," she says. "In these, I've avoided ink and used only colour pencils for a sharp, vibrant effect. Fruits and vegetables have now become part of my personal universe. Since I have a garden, I draw what I grow. I've always loved still life, but never felt the need to paint it — until recently. Painting is an expression of my inner being."

Her paintings move playfully through moments of leisure, engaging in a fluid dialogue with nature — flora, fauna, animal and human forms. Her love for nature, nurtured in her hometown of Anthe in southern France, carries into her work, where birds, fruits, and flowers shift seamlessly between observation and imagination. The layers within each piece converse with one another.

"It is true that black allows colour to shine through contrast. In darkness, if you light a small lamp, everything appears magical because of the shadows. For me, black works the same way," she says. In Cabinet of Curiosities, geometric complexity and colour coexist in a richly layered yet controlled composition. "There are two universes in that work — outside and beneath the globe. Different scales cohabitate. It allows me to give a defined space to still life under glass."

What comes next? Another painting. "Beauty and joy are two spheres I will never tire of exploring," she says.

Printed and published by B A Ravi on behalf of The Printers (Mysore) Private Ltd, at The Printers (Mysore) Private Ltd, Plot nos. 7-12, Kumbalgodu Industrial Area, Bengaluru - 560 074. Executive Editor: K V Subramanya (Responsible for selection of news under the PRB Act). Editorial Office: 75, M.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560 001. E-mail: editor@deccanherald.co.in. Phone: 080-45557333, Editorial: 080-45557279/080-45557280, Circ: 080-45557204, Advt: 080-45557163/080-45557164. Also printed at Hubballi-Dharwad, Mangaluru, Kalaburagi, Davangere, Mysuru and Hosapete. © All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is prohibited. RNI No 3608/57. Registered, Regn. No: KRNA/BGE/1027/2023-2025, posted at Bangalore PSO, Mysore Road, Bengaluru - 560 026. Website: www.printersmysore.com